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FEBRUARY 1991

A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

Tyrrell to Bush • Gold to Blumenthal

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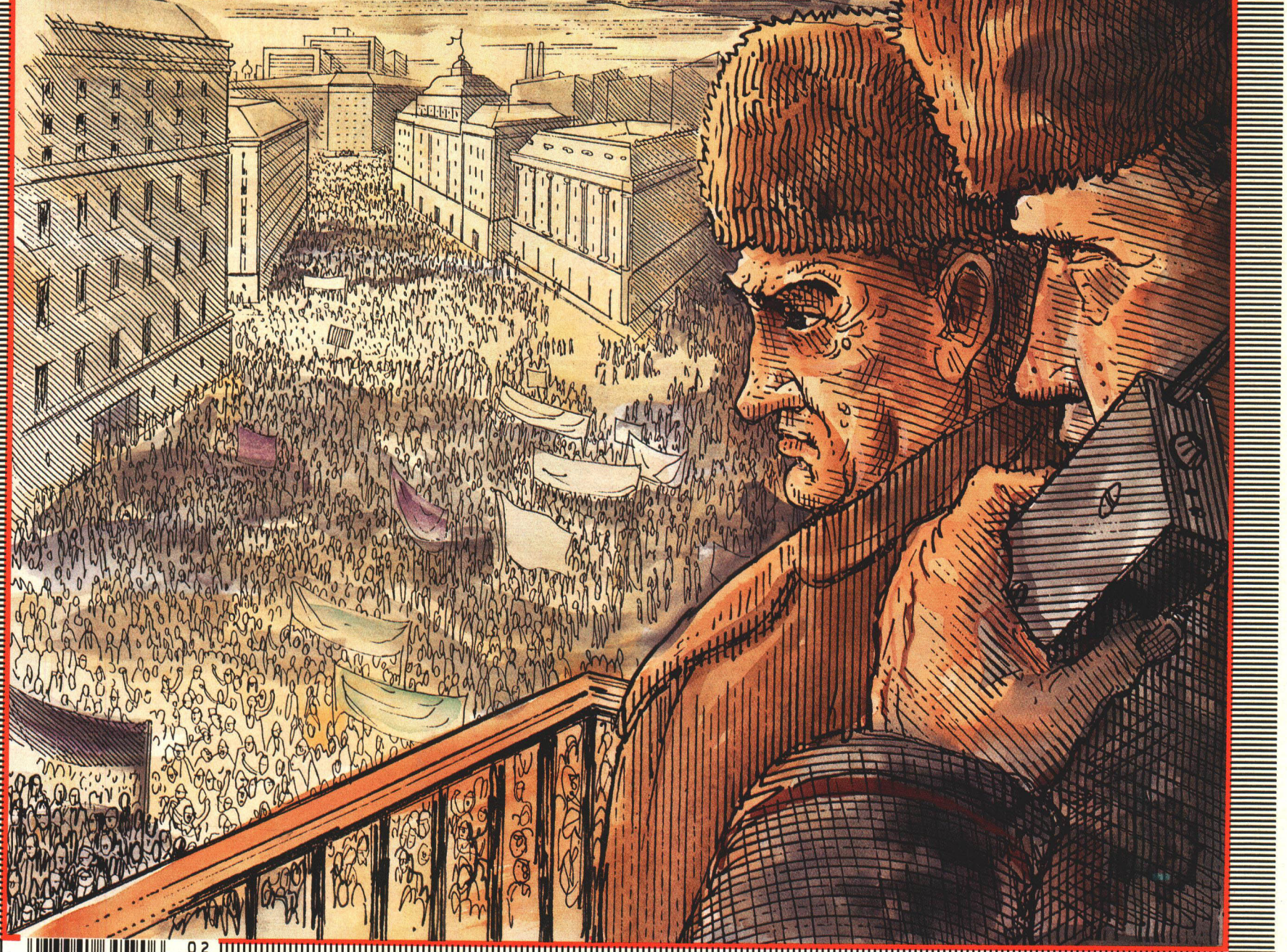

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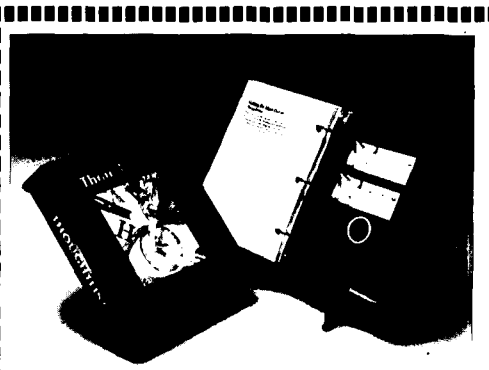

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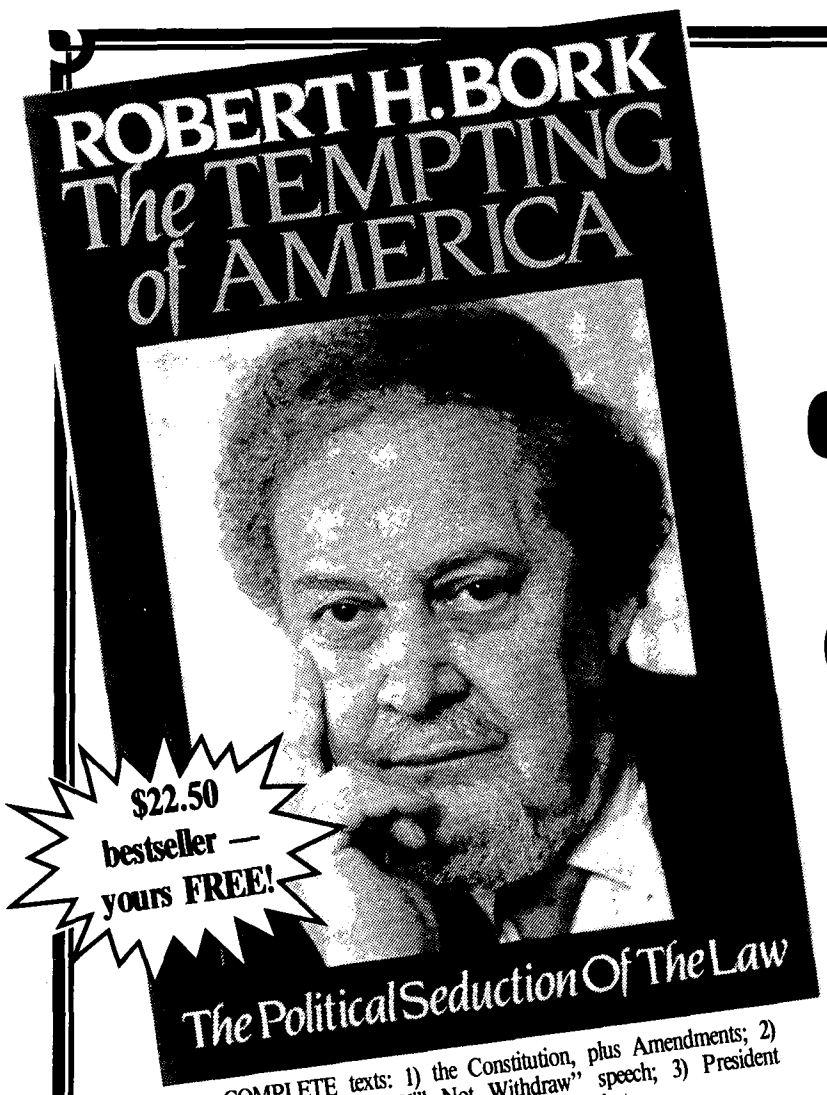

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Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and its designs on Saudi Arabia have startled the world. When asked to relinquish his conquest. President Saddam Hussein said that he would consider doing so, provided that Israel would withdraw from the administered territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and from the Gaza strip. Is that a proposal that should be considered? Would such linkage be conducive to the welfare of the United States and the rest of the world?

What are the facts?

■ Some believe that the strategic value of Israel had been diminished in the wake of the "luke-warming" of the cold war with the Soviet Union. The aggression by Iraq against Kuwait and its threatening posture against Saudi Arabia show the fallacy of such thinking. The U.S. has committed (so far) over 300,000 personnel and untold military assets in the area. Saudi Arabia having purchased close to $100 billion of the world's most advanced weaponry, has been found to be totally impotent, even before the first lunge of the Iraqi aggressor and has asked for the protection of the United States. Kuwait, overrun in less than 24 hours by a small contingent of the Iraqi military, also had acquired tens of billions of dollars of sophisticated armament. All of it was "liberated" by the Iraqis. The most sensitive military secrets fell into enemy hands.

■ In order not to "offend" the Arabs, the United States.Administration has asked Israel to "lie low" in this present conflict. Though highly classified and politically sensitive intelligence is provided by Israel to the U.S.. Israel is indeed on the sidelines. It will in all likelihood remain in that posture unless it finds its own security threatened. And that could very easily come about, because Hussein, feeling cornered, may attempt an attack on Israel. He would do that in the quite justified expectation that those Arab states that are now "allied" with the United States would promptly switch their allegiance. Because even though the Arabs hate each other, they are all united in their greater hatred of the Jews.

■ The U.S. carries most of the financial and military burden of the Middle East action. The Administration has decided that it is politically advisable to involve the Arab nations in this enterprise. We thus find ourselves with such unpleasant associates as, for example, Syria. Its president, Hafez Assad, though the mortal enemy of Saddam Hussein, is equally unsavory. He has slaughtered his own citizens by the tens of thousands, he is a terrorist leader specializing in killing Americans (remember PanAm 103?), and he knows the use and value of hostages. All these Arab countries are likely to ask for a "reward" for their "cooperation" with the United States. And, the world already knows what "reward" will be expected: More pressure on Israel to yield Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank') and the Gaza strip for a Palestinian independent state.

■ It is estimated that the cost of this present conflict is on the order of $50 million per day during the non-shooting stage. The cost is estimated to escalate to $1 billion per day if open hostilities break out. It is well to keep these figures in mind when discussing military aid to Israel. At present , Israel gets $1.2 billion per year in U.S. economic aid, almost all of which is repaid to the United States as service on debt. Israel also gets $1.8 billion per year in military assistance. Virtually every penny of it is spent in the United States. Compared to the cost of the present Mid-East operation, compared to the $130 billion spent each year on the defense of Europe, and compared to the $30 billion spent yearly in Japan/Korea, the contribution to Israel is a defense bargain. And there is an additional "bonus": Over 300,000 American soldiers are stationed with NATO, over 30,000 in the Far East, and close to 400,000 by now in Saudi Arabia. But there is not a single American soldier stationed in Israel and none will be requested. If and when the crunch comes, Israel will know how to inflict intolerable damage on Iraq or to any other enemy of the Judeo-Christian civilization, of which Israel is the only defender in that part of the world.

Israel is America's only reliable ally in the Middle East. Its undiminished strength and ability are of greatest political and military importance to the U.S.. Nothing must be done to diminish Israel's military potential. Yielding the "West Bank" to the hostile "Palestinians", Saddam Hussein's fanatic supporters, would be a suicidal move for Israel and a military catastrophe for the United States. One hundred retired U.S. generals and admirals are agreed that Israel must retain the Jordan River as its defense border. Those who consider Saddam Hussein's preposterous proposition that, in exchange for Iraq's withdrawal form Kuwait, Israel should withdraw from the "West Bank" do not understand the political and military realities of the Middle East.

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Volume 24 Number 2, February 1991
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Economic reporting funded partially by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The American Spectator (ISSN 0148-8414) is published monthly at 2020 N. 14th Street, Suite 750, Arlington, Virginia 22216. Second class postage paid at Arlington, Virginia, and additional mailing offices. One-year subscription is $33. Vol. 24, No. 2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The American Spectator, P.O. Box 549, Arlington, Virginia 22216-0549.

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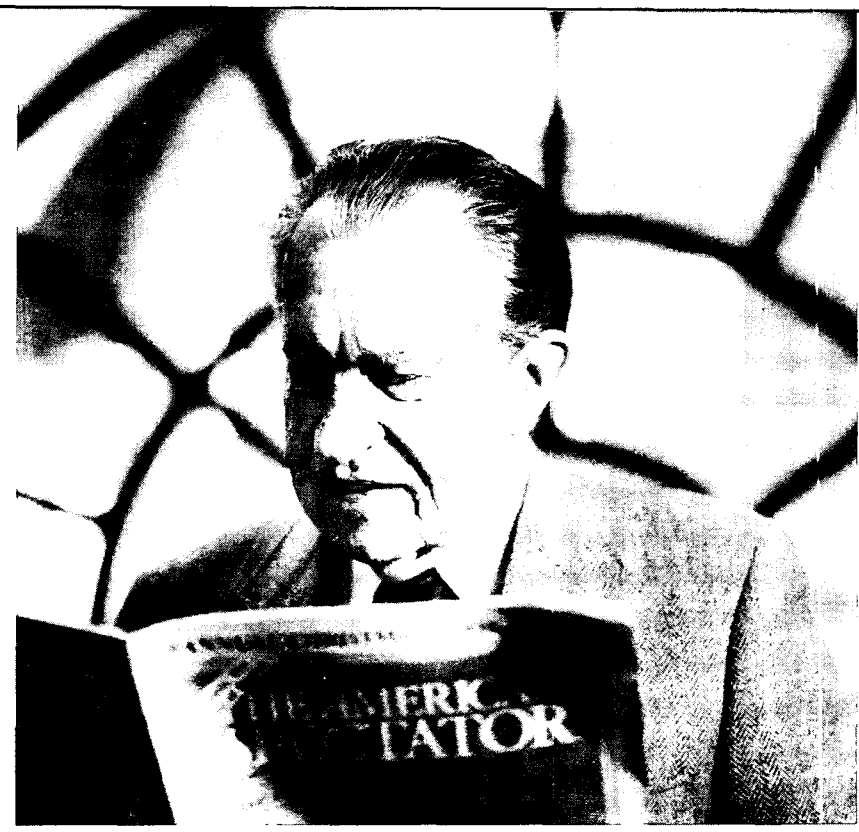

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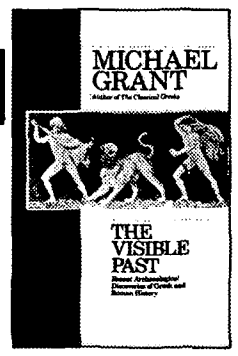

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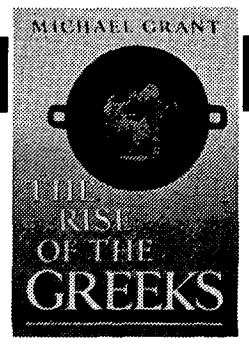

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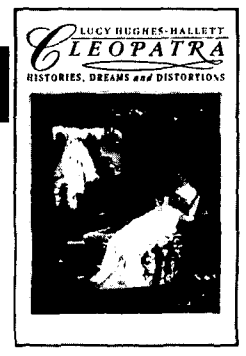

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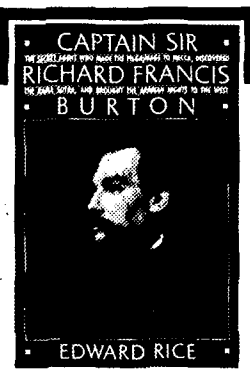

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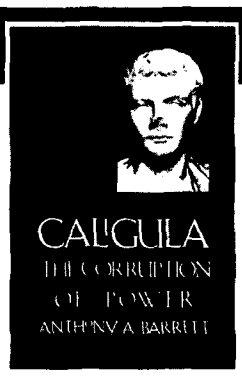

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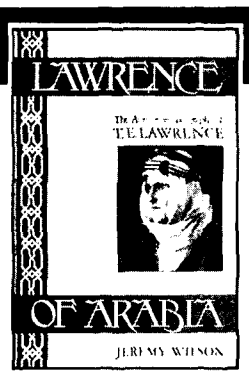

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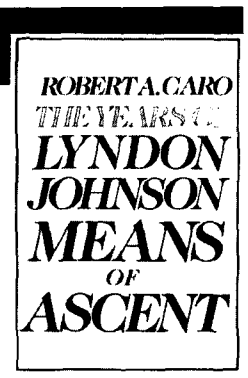

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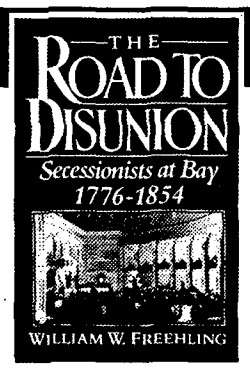

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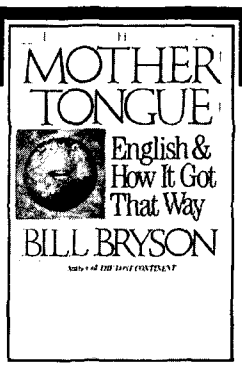

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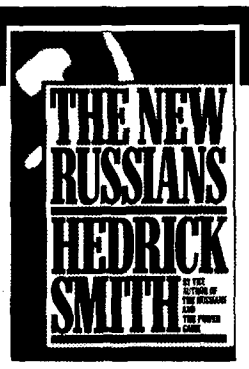

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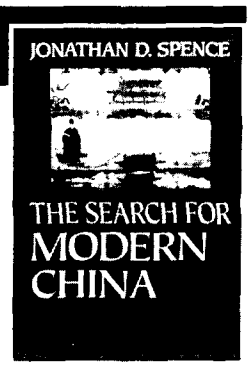

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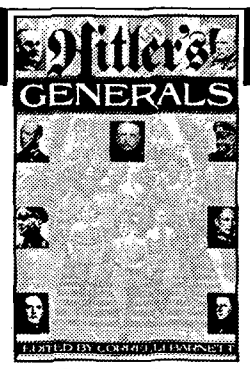

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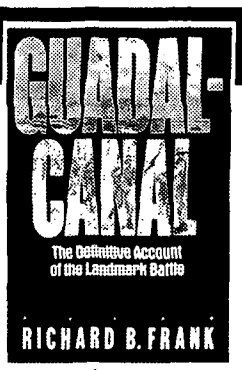

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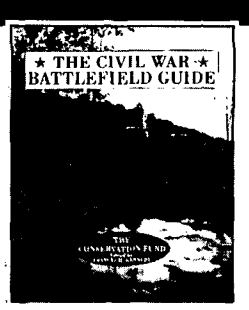

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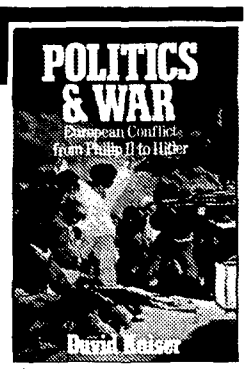

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• The first year of the 1990s ended eerily, but not the five great stories that ran through it: (1) gathering storm clouds in the Persian Gulf, (2) gathering recession, (3) growing European unity, (4) the rebirth of the nations of Eastern Europe, and (5) a trend in Moscow best described by Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze in his unanticipated December 20 resignation. "Dictatorship is coming," president Mikhail Gorbachev's erstwhile colleague intoned. "I state it with complete responsibility. No one knows what kind this dictatorship will be . . . " And back in the United States the American intelligentsia continued to be absorbed with poofter politics, feminist fevers, and how best to resurrect the Feeling of Woodstock, circa 1969.

• The problems of Stanford University's embattled president, Mr. Donald Kennedy, worsened when, in response to charges that his clique had overcharged the federal government by as much as $200 million for administering government contracts, Washington sent a team of Navy contract experts to campus for what the *San Francisco Chronicle* described as "tough talks." It was the Bush Administration's largest military deployment in this hemisphere since it undertook to dislodge another well-known dictator, General Manuel Antonio Noriega. Supposedly, the Office of Naval Research sent its men into action to investigate allegations that the Kennedy regime has improperly charged the government for such things as a cedar-lined closet, flowers for President Kennedy's personal use, and depreciation on the university's 72-foot yacht—an educational instrument equipped with a Jacuzzi and television equipment capable of playing Nintendo games, one of the dictator's passions. President Kennedy could not be reached for comment, but Mr. Norman Hanson, a spokesman for the Navy, reports that the investigation "is not at all common and has never been done in the four or five years that I am aware of."

• In other news from academe, Duke University's English Department is considering offering courses in dog walking, nose blowing, and nude cooking. Panic broke out at the State University of New York at Binghamton when a bogus edition of the student newspaper published a front-page report that the United States had invaded Iraq. Once the hoax was exposed, the school's president, Miss Lois B. DeFleur, canceled her morning appointment at the university beauty parlor to announce that "while we are strongly in support of freedom of expression, we do not condone this attempt to manipulate the power of the media." Psychological counseling has been made available to disturbed members of the student body and faculty, and Mr. Matthew M. Furman, managing editor of the campus's authorized newspaper, announced plans to sue the student group that had perpetrated the hoax, Looking Left, which opposes all use of force in the world. President DeFleur went ahead with her afternoon pedicure, but apparently was too upset to have her legs waxed.

• At Bryn Mawr College, neo-paganism is winning adherents while eliciting scabrous responses from an unusual alliance of adherents to traditional Western religions and to atheism. According to the *New York Times*, "After a cross of talcum powder was made outside the room where neo-pagans were celebrating the Celtic New Year on October 31, President Mary Patterson McPherson and two other campus officials sent a letter to all students condemning the harassment." President Patterson McPherson canceled her daily aerobics class and spent several hours getting the letter just right. Then she canceled her afternoon shopping appointment to "monitor the situation" and ensure that no rough stuff ensued when neo-pagans from the faculty and student body gathered to howl at the moon. "Starting last year," the *Times* reports, "students and occasionally professors have congregated at the 'moon bench' on the green in the center of the campus and released angst-ridden shrieks that echo throughout Bryn Mawr," making it hard for other students to concentrate on their Nintendo games. And, at Brown University, efforts continue to keep the walls of the ladies' room at the university library free of the names of leading campus rapists. The alleged rapists have protested that publicizing their names in this way has caused them embarrassment and made it difficult to obtain university-supplied condoms in their preferred colors. The controversy continues. Okay, okay, so some of these campus reports are total fabrications, but academe has become a pretty goofball world, so you can judge for yourself which of the above items took place and which resulted from a solo confrontation with a gin bottle.

• On December 5, the peerless *New York Post* published sections from a sex-education curriculum being proposed to New York City's Board of Education, which is planning a course on the proper use of condoms by aroused teenagers. We quote from the aforementioned curriculum: "TEACHING SRATEGIES: It is important that these lessons be presented in a nonthreatening, fun manner. This is not a class about AIDS the disease and its ravages. It's about sex in the age of AIDS and how it can still be fun and responsible, safe and erotic. Expect some laughter and joking and be ready to join in. WHAT YOU WILL NEED: Magic Markers, bananas (or cucumbers or zucchini)—one for each student, latex condoms—two for each student, tubes of water-soluble lubricant . . . " Enough!

• The Democrats' spirits remained ebullient, as the government's main set of economic indicators dropped 1.2 percent in November, the fifth straight monthly decline. Mr. Daniel Ramos, 18, languishes in a Los Angeles jail after being charged with spray-painting the word "Chaka" on 10,000 water towers, railroad cars, and freeways from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Yet, as of this hour, not a peep has been heard in defense of him from the Republic's arts community, not even from Mr. John Frohnmayer, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Described by authorities as the nation's most prolific graffitist, Mr. Ramos spent at least two years traveling the state by public transport, diligently spraying his favorite word with uncommon inventiveness, from "simple scrolls on utility poles and backs of stop signs," in the words of Mr. Mike Qualls of the Los Angeles city attorney's office, "to multicolor, huge Chakas that took hours to put on the freeway retaining walls and bridges." Perhaps you have seen one.

• In San Mateo County, California, members of the Peninsula Humane Society, obnubilating all the salutary intelligence that our leaders have passed on to us about condoms, have begun a campaign to make it illegal for dogs and cats to copulate even in the privacy of their own homes. How different is the Humane Society's understanding of simple human sexuality from the enlightenment that radiates from Cambridge, Massachusetts, where on December 17, Clifford's Green Street Grill became this great city's first eatery to comply with an ordinance enjoining all hotels, motels, restaurants, and bars to install condom-vending machines by

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December 31, 1991. In Midwest City, Oklahoma, Mr. Scott Nelson has been charged with assaulting his wife Jackie with a frozen turkey—the bird was not injured, nor even eaten. It was but one of thousands of unhappy events related to the unpleasant end-of-the-year celebrations that are still observed in the Republic despite past experience. In Beverly Hills, California, the local American Jewish Congress and the American Civil Liberties Union conspired to bar a 28-foot Hanukkah menorah from a municipal park. In Monterey, the ACLU's target was a Nativity scene.

• The pathetic decline of former presidents Daniel Ortega and Jimmy Carter continues. In Bonn, Mr. Ortega, looking glassy-eyed, announced that, after conferring with president Saddam Hussein, King Hussein (no relation), Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, and Mr. Yasir Arafat, Mr. Ortega is ready to lead "the peace process" in the Middle East. He was seeking the assistance of Mr. Willy Brandt, but Mr. Brandt's telephone number is unlisted. And, according to the *St. Petersburg Times*, the anile Jimmy Carter, in an interview soon to be seen on public television, "does not try to conceal his loathing for Mr. Reagan's policies on civil rights at home and human rights abroad, his military adventures and foreign policy and what he charges is Mr. Reagan's refusal to accept responsibility for his own failures." As for Mr. Carter's explanation of his own incomparable performance, the Wonder Boy pronounces: "I was treated more negatively by the press than any other president in this century—that includes Nixon . . . "

• Finally, there is no truth to reports that Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell was apprehended at Washington's Jockey Club whilst relieving himself in a men's room sink—at least there is not much. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Shooting Common Pool

Tom Bethell sets forth a theory of the Common Pool ("Politics Misconstrued," *TAS*, January 1991) to the effect that we elect legislators to transfer as large a share as possible of the Common Pool of resources to our particular pockets rather than to the pockets of the constituents of some other legislator; and that we elect chief executives to reduce or keep down the size of the Common Pool itself, which comes out of the pockets of us all.

Mr. Bethell does not proceed to a logical secondary conclusion—that we would all benefit by constitutional changes to increase executive power and decrease legislative power in all processes of resource flows into and out of the Common Pool. For a good example, we could give chief executives an item veto. Other possibilities are contained in the Confederate Constitution—the banning of legislative riders for one, or even multi-purpose legislation.

—John W. Bowling
Troy, Alabama

Armey and Dangerous

Dick Armey's "Our Kingdom for a Deal" (*TAS*, December 1990) effectively delineates the horror of President Bush's betrayal of the GOP mainstream and the plight of a public abandoned by the only person who had the clout to check congressional abuse of its taxing power and an insatiable lust for executive power as well. The question is what's to be done about it.

I have never seen a Congress more deserving of cynicism, a President less equipped to hold his own, or a citizenry more in need of intercession. So here goes. George Bush should be persuaded that he can't win a second term and announce that he won't run for reelection in 1992.

The wilier members of Congress refuse to declare war and are insisting that he may not act without their approval. They are laying the groundwork for the extraction of compromises from a President who has just demonstrated that he is not in the same league as they are. It remains to be seen if the concerns of such a band of relentless partisans is in the national interest or in their own, for the temptation to prevent George Bush from looking like a hero certain of a 1992 shoo-in must concentrate their minds terribly.

Who wants to make book that they won't try to steal credit and generally muddle things so Mr. Bush fumbles in the Gulf like he did at home? Who wants to gamble that he can outwit them? Is it worth the risk when so much is at stake? I don't think so.

The conservative community should publicly break away and rally around a competing leadership capable of establishing a power base that can't be ignored by the opposition, the President, and the media. If the President sees the light and cooperates by showing a little backbone when critical issues are at stake, it will be to the public good, but it should not be allowed to alter plans for a new ticket in 1992.

—Murray Howden
Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania

Tongue Ties

I would like to correct a mistake in John Simon 's most appealing and informative review of *The Mother Tongue* by Bill Bryson (*TAS*, December 1990). The mistake lies in the statement " . . . Slavic languages don't even have definite (or indefinite) articles."

Bulgarian, a Slavic language, has a definite article. This article, however, is not a separate word which comes before the noun, i.e., it is not like the English *the*. Rather, it is a suffix which is added to the noun. The suffix has several forms, depending primarily on the gender and number of the noun.

For example, the suffix for a feminine singular noun is "ta." Thus, "*the* woman" is written "zhena*ta*," as opposed to "zhena," which means "a woman" or "woman." Bulgarian has no *indefinite* article.

So, in this particular—and, I might add, rare—instance, Mr. Simon is but half right. A fact which in no way diminished my pleasure in his enlightening review.

—Boris G. Nicoloff
Beverly Hills, California

John Simon accepts Bill Bryson's claim "that it was an American in England . . . who changed the absurd 'gyrating circus' into the commonsensical 'traffic circle' " but the English use neither; they say "roundabout"—a noun, like the "rotary" used in some American states.

Speaking of English road terms, I was horrified to see, in the *Highway Code* (1987 revision) published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, a facsimile of an official placard for "flammable liquid." Like Mr. Simon, I had thought "flammable" a false antonym to an imaginary "unflammable," born of American sign-painters' ignorance. Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (1970 edition) proclaimed, with more optimism than prescience, "It must have been a supposed ambiguity in *inflammable* that led to the coining of the word *flammable*. But that could only make things worse, and *flammable* is now rare . . . " Spray paint, anyone?

—Lionel Albert
Montreal, Quebec

The Hydrogen Alternative

One can only hope that the decision-makers can appreciate the depth and complexities of alternative fuels by studying Michael Fumento's illuminating article, "What Kind of Fuel Am I?" (*TAS*, November 1990).

I regret that Mr. Fumento considers hydrogen—per se—to be "experimental" and did not define it, since hydrogen will become increasingly important, not only as a clean combustible fuel, but more appropriately as the primary ingredient for Fuel Cells: electrochemical devices that chemically combine a fuel and an oxidant to produce DC electricity, i.e., reverse electrolysis.

Given Mr. Fumento's positive comments regarding electric vehicles and their higher efficiencies, the experimental hybrid electric vehicles with fuel cells for cruising and battery power for rapid acceleration should be receiving far more consideration—read, funding—than the carbon-based liquid and gaseous alternative fuels with their smog-forming acids and carcinogenic problems.

Although we have, in fact, enjoyed the benefits of a "merchant" hydrogen economy for nearly forty years, we must direct considerable efforts toward decentralized production of storable and transportable hydrogen via solar, wind, and hydro-powered electrolysis plants, instead of continuing to produce most of our hydrogen by the process of steam-reformed natural gas.

The on-board storage of gaseous hydrogen has progressed, albeit slowly, from heavy metallic hybrids to lightweight inorganic compounds, thanks to recent efforts in basic physical chemistry. For example, Dr. James Schwarz of Chemical Engineering, Syracuse University, has directed the development of a unique lightweight hydrogen storage system utilizing active carbon that can be integrated with virtually any vehicle or process requiring hydrogen for combustion.

The future costs and environmental benefits of hydrogen as a fuel can be competitively realized when the investment community recognizes the short-sighted political and economic attitudes that pervade the evaluation of an effective alternative-fuel mandate.

Meanwhile, many independent hydrogen researchers and innovators are searching for funding sources through channels other than the federal government. This direction, perhaps, will accelerate the acceptance of a clean, hydrogen economy. *—John A. Owen*
Consultant on Marine Engineering
South Egremont, Massachusetts

(Editor's note: Michael Fumento will reply to Mr. Owen's letter, and to Donald Wulfinghoff's letter of last month, in our next issue.)

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EDITORIALS

A MEMO TO GEORGE BUSH

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

To: President Bush
From: R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.
Re: The State of the Union 1991

It has been my honor to be your friend. Early in the presidential sweepstakes I was glad to throw my personal support to you. You were the best qualified. You had loyally and competently assisted in the Reagan Revolution. And just as Ronald Reagan had earned the nomination in 1980, you had earned the nomination in 1988. For this decision my colleagues on the right esteemed me an ass, but your subsequent accomplishments validated my judgment. You ran a fine campaign that promised a continuation of the Conservative Revival. Your first year and a half were boffo by me. I disagreed on an issue or two, but that's life. You believe in casting for bluefish from an open boat; I believe it is unseemly to take on the blues unless one stands knee-deep in the surf with solid sandy beach beneath one's feet and a beer nearby.

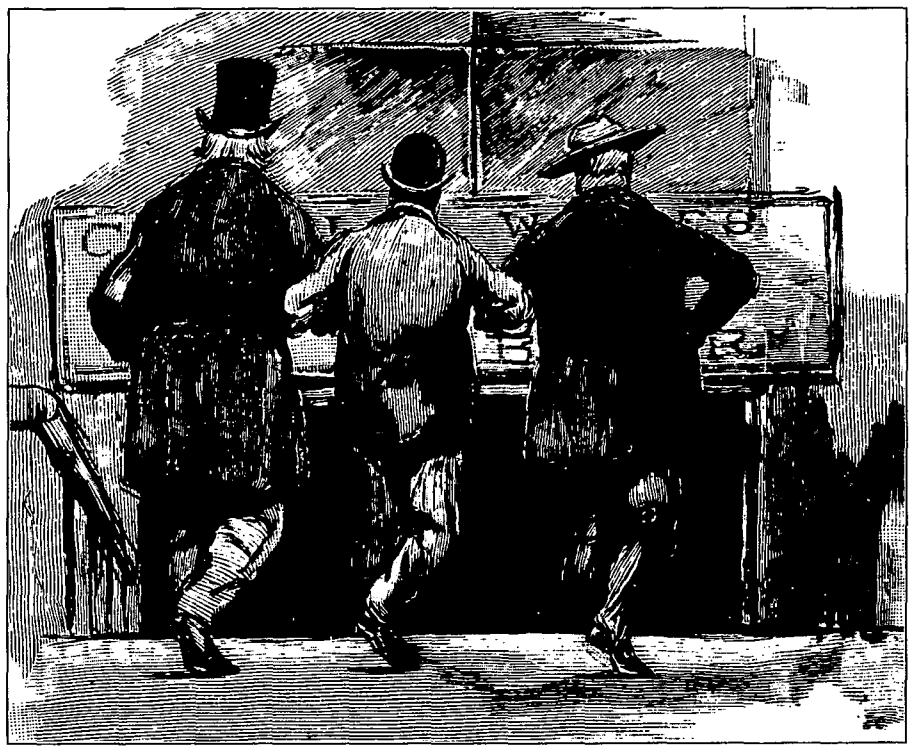
A more consequential disagreement developed when, in the recent budget negotiations, you acted so chivalrously toward the Democratic spendthrifts. Remembering how they dishonored their 1982 promises to balance tax cuts with budget cuts during the TEFRA negotiations and how profoundly partisan they are, I believed that your gentlemanly demeanor in these negotiations would be used against you, leading to insignificant budget cuts, a higher deficit, and tax increases that would only impede economic growth. You were negotiating with cads. They are as unlikely to practice budget restraint as they are to attend a decent Swiss finishing school without incident. They have no theory of how wealth is created in a country, aside from the rudimentary notions of the late Robin Hood. You were a perfect gentleman in abjuring your no-new-taxes vow. Their response was to raise spending, raise the deficit, and then to imply that you had just lied to your constituents.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. is editor-in-chief of The American Spectator.

The White House is a deceptively tranquil manse. One minute all is peaceful, and the next minute you are living in a fortress under enemy fire. It seems to me that you have no other alternative but to return the enemy's fire. In your 1990 State of the Union address, you magnanimously offered your hand to the Congress. This time around I urge you to remind the citizenry that you walked the extra mile with the Democrats and that they tripped you. If they can trip you in the Middle East, they will do that too. In this State of the Union address I urge you to identify Congress as the enemy of prosperity and the source of the deficit. Commence hostilities with the Democratic spendthrifts.

Anterior to that, of course, it is critical that you bring your party together. It has two wings and it needs both to fly. The Old Wing is the wing of competence. Its members get things done. Unfortunately they are not very reflective as to what is to be done. They run government well but have not over the past decade or so absorbed what it is that government ought to do. They believe in the status quo, which in politics is dangerous. The other wing of the party recognizes that government must move. Otherwise, (a) the government's enemies will train their fire on it, and (b) the needs of the people will not be met. The other wing is the conservative wing. Its members have the passion, the energy, the numbers, and the ideas that made the Republican party the power that it was in your first year and a half. Its members get out the vote. They work the campaigns. Their leaders include the likes of Kemp and Gingrich. Call it the Thatcher wing of the Republican party. The ideas that it brought to government in the 1980s were developed over a period of thirty years by men like Nobel laureates Milton Friedman and James Buchanan. The ideas percolate today in distinguished think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the Hoover Institution. They are circulated in our illustrious, heroic, beautifully edited, and reasonably priced intellectual reviews.

There is no substitute for the Thatcher wing's energy and there is no alternative to its ideas. This the Liberals have demonstrated. All the Liberals have been able to come up with over the past decade are more of the same blowzy boondoggles that have rendered Harlem and other poverty centers ever more desolate and pitiable and the budget more bloated and dangerous to our economy. You have doubtless noted that wherever this phony Liberalism gains the ascendancy, confusion and demoralization follow. Consider the inner city; consider the university.



There is, then, no alternative to an agenda that builds on the growth of the 1980s—at least no alternative that will allow the country to prosper and you to return to the halcyon days of a few months back.

In the State of the Union, take on the fatuous in Congress who let you down in the budget negotiations. They have turned Congress into a feeding trough. Their sole conception of government envisages a gigantic milch cow with multitudinous teats awaiting the arrival of ever more Democratic constituents. Summon the nation to democratize Capitol Hill. Banish the special interests that have made Congress a lifetime appointment. Banish the PACs. Let us by all means have term limitation. Twelve years is long enough for any solon, and as head of your party do all that you can to see that the redistricting of congressional seats reflects the electorate and not merely the regnant political order. Get control of the budget with the line-item veto. A President should have budgetary tools the equal of those now granted forty-three governors. You were elected in 1988 partly because you were recognized as the defender of the people against the entrenched interests of the Old Order. Now take on the Old Order's last political redoubt, the parasitic Congress.

Then, too, you were elected by a political majority that recognized economic growth as the key to scotching poverty and maintaining the American way of life. Get the economy growing again. Return to your campaign for lowering the capital gains tax along the

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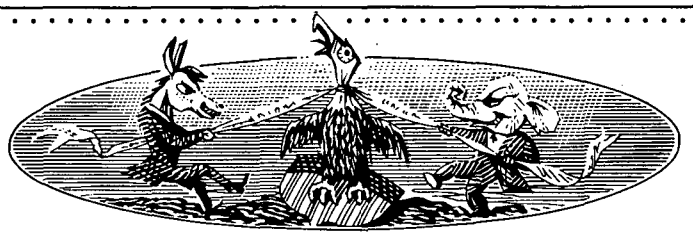
lines suggested by the chairman of *The American Spectator*'s publications committee, Ted Forstmann. Lower that tax to, say, 15 percent on capital gains held at least a year and eliminate it on all sales of assets held longer than three years, and stabilize the dollar by linking it to a basket of commodities including gold. This policy will encourage savings, investment, risk-taking, and increased productivity.

Another stimulant to economic growth would come from a cut in the payroll taxes of working Americans, which, if need be, could be balanced by cuts in Medicare benefits and farm subsidies paid to affluent Americans. Additionally, it is time to return the child deduction to the level of the late 1940s, putting it in constant dollars at $6,000. In response to Senator Mitchell's bathos about "fairness," may I prescribe a variation on Mrs. Thatcher's response to her critics: "You, sir, would feed the mob's baser impulses by making the rich less well off, even though by so doing the poor are also made less well off and less capable of self-reliance."

Finally let us address the problem of the poor, not for the votes but out of simple decency. After two generations as the special concern of welfare state Democrats America's poor are more wretched than before the *soi-disant* Liberals discovered them. Only the Thatcher wing of the Republican party has anything new to offer. Come out for the "empowerment" package, for choice in schools, for privatizing public housing, for workfare, for removing thugs from the streets of the inner city, and against any policy that smacks of quotas, which only perpetuate injustice and bigotry.

In sum: pull your party together, take on the enemies of productive America now roosting in Congress, revive the economy with tax cuts and a sound dollar, and raise the spirits and the self-reliance of the poor with a hand up, not a handout. Over the past fifteen years it has become ever more apparent that your party is the party of ideas, of competence, of working Americans, and of entrepreneurs. If you will add to this coalition the poor now fortified with hope . . . well, you have got for yourself the New Deal coalition revived, and Senator Mitchell is stuck with the Old Order. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



THE FANTASY OF A UNITED EUROPE

by Tom Bethell

As I realized on a recent visit to England, no subject has been more misleadingly reported than the putative emergence of a "United States of Europe." The consensus in the U.S. seems to be that a single European currency will soon appear, to be followed in due course by political union of the European Community nations. It's only a matter of time, apparently, everything having been planned by the great and the good in Brussels. Those who try to stand in the way, such as the reckless Margaret Thatcher, will be swept aside by the forces of history and "reality."

Thanks to the overwhelming tendency of journalists to travel in flocks to the same conclusion, I once again find myself with an "exclusive" on my hands. Ladies and gentlemen, no matter what the *Washington Post* says ("Europe is sharply accelerating its progress toward greater union . . . single currency under a single monetary authority before the end of this decade . . . strengthen the European Parliament at the expense of national governments . . ."), there will be no United States of Europe. (Just in case you had this on your list of things to worry about, which I suspect you did not. Read on, regardless.)

What's supposed to happen first is free trade within the twelve countries of the European Community, by the end of 1992—a desirable goal, of course, and incidentally one of the few economic ideas that liberals and conservatives seem to agree on. Free trade, however, does not require the sacrifice of sovereignty. Nor is free trade what animates Jacques Delors, the French socialist president of the European Commission, his highly paid Eurocrats,[1] and the *New York Times* Editorial Board. It was Mrs. Thatcher who put her tactless finger on the key issue when she said at Bruges in 1988: "We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels."

The optimistic vision of a new Europe has been best articulated by Norman Macrae, former deputy editor of the *Economist*. If capital and people really are going to be free to move where they will within Europe, the result will be a competitive deregulation of life throughout Europe and a decline of government power. Companies will move to the parts of Europe where taxes are lowest, and so on. "This might lead to a gradual interweaving of Europe's economies and societies," the *Economist* recently wrote, "while avoiding the Delorsian threat of supranational government."

Notice that this vision of competitive deregulation can only be realized if the countries of Europe remain separate nations. The effect of subjecting them all to one overarching set of homogeneous laws will be to ensure that competition between them will be eliminated. Something like this is the case in the U.S. today, where the dominant influence of the federal government largely eliminates the competitive advantage of minimal regulation or taxation at the state level.

Free trade and capital movement, combined with the sovereignty of existing nations, will therefore create a "federal" Europe without further help. I am here using "federal" in its original and correct sense of treaty-linked sovereign states. It is a system of decentralized power. Since the New Deal, however, the tendency has been for the word to be construed in the opposite way, denoting a set of nominally separate jurisdictions all alike dominated by a central authority. When François Mitterrand says that the goal of Europe is "federal," he means the kind of centrally controlled power that Thatcher was warning against.

The plan is for Europe to have a single currency by 1997. Which tells us that

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

[1] "A manager at age 40 can expect to earn about $96,000 a year—before taxes. Eurocrats are excused from Belgian or national taxes. They pay a progressive EC tax, which is very low by European standards, but often their tax bill is lower than their added allowances. On top of salary, there is a family allowance, an education allowance, an expatriation allowance, a household allowance, and so on."—David Brooks, *Wall Street Journal*, December 14, 1990.

The 1990 Strange New Respect Award

Chumps and Charleys, the Republican businessmen's club in Washington, D.C., was the venue for the 1990 Strange New Respect Award. Recipients were Republican leaders Bob Dole of Kansas and Robert Michel of Illinois. Both were long overdue for the award, it was felt, but their steadfast support for the 1990 tax increase, labeled "deficit reduction" for public consumption, made them hard to overlook for another year. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell and House Speaker Tom Foley took time off from their busy schedules to present the awards. Foley praised the veteran Republicans as "the loyal opposition, always ready to put the future of their country ahead of narrow party or factional interest. They have done so many times in the past, but none more urgently than in the summer of 1990."

"Some conservatives may not be happy about this," Rep. Michel said in accepting the award, "but then I don't know what it would take to make them happy. But our grandchildren will have reason to thank us." Mitchell graciously replied that he hoped Michel would stay on in the House of Representatives "for at least another decade," an apt expression of the nonpartisan, cooperative spirit that has infused the Democratic leadership since George Bush came to town. A roar of approval then went up from the assembled Chumps, who sang a few choruses of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" before heading off to the bar. —*T.B.*

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the goal is centralism, not competitive deregulation. Unlike a *common* currency (coexisting with national competitors such as the franc and the pound), a monopoly currency will prove feasible only if existing nations surrender control of their monetary and (to a large extent) fiscal policies. According to Karl Otto Pohl of the Bundesbank: "A monetary union presupposes considerable shifts in the responsibility for economic policy to a central authority and hence a far-reaching reshaping of the Community in political and institutional terms. . . . A substantial transfer of authority will also be necessary in the field of fiscal policy."

As Michael Heseltine pointed out, monetary union entails "federalism by stealth." (He later challenged Mrs. Thatcher's leadership of the Conservatives, bringing her down without elevating himself.) Very few people in Europe outside the Brussels bureaucracy really understand these monetary complexities and bewildering acronyms (ECU, ERM, EMU). The (London) *Spectator* noted the suspicion that "'Europe,' to the average Briton, is the place advertised in holiday brochures. It is where using foreign money is fun, because all money is spending money; it is where one sleeps in hotels and dines in restaurants." In a Harris poll almost a quarter thought that Turkey was a member of the EC, and four percent thought Egypt was as well. But a large proportion of Britons (62 percent) wish to remain a separate country.

Understanding that sovereignty was at stake, Mrs. Thatcher warned in Rome last October that in pressing ahead with monetary union the other European leaders were "living in cloud cuckoo land . . . people who get on a train like that deserve to get taken for a ride," and so on. This embarrassed Tory wets and Euro-federalists, who wondered (as the *London Times* put it) why she couldn't accept economic union the way other heads of state did—"as so much diplomatic esperanto, waffle which can be agreed today and disregarded tomorrow."

Apparently, the other European heads of state don't have the slightest intention of surrendering sovereignty, but are merely playing along with the planners. Meanwhile, they found it convenient to hide behind Mrs. T's skirts. Evidence for this was plentiful in the newspapers, but for some reason only in the fine print. With unification behind it and faced now with the cost of rebuilding its eastern sector, not to mention feeding and housing the Soviet army, Germany is suddenly going to become very chary of ceding control of its economic policy to a coalition of non-German spendthrifts. All along the French have been more interested in using the EC as an instrument of subsidy for their farmers, meanwhile paying Brussels in the coinage of hypocrisy.

Two things have contributed to the illusion of progress toward unity. The 1997 date by which irrevocable decisions must be made is remote enough that dissembling pols can play along, knowing that they won't be in office when the crunch comes. (This almost certainly applies to Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterrand.) Second, some of the poorer countries, such as Spain and Portugal, have gone along gladly because they are net beneficiaries of the European Regional Development Fund, an industrial-policy cash transfer scheme, with Spain getting over 30 percent of the money. But how much longer will Germans facing tax increases go on paying for such boondoggles as bridge-rebuilding in the poorer parts of Spain?

The failure of Britain's Tories to grasp the unreality of the European Community has cost the party dearly. Thatcher put forthright truth-telling ahead of tactful evasions, and then lost the support of Euro-wets. A few months earlier Nicholas Ridley, her secretary of state for industry, was even more tact-

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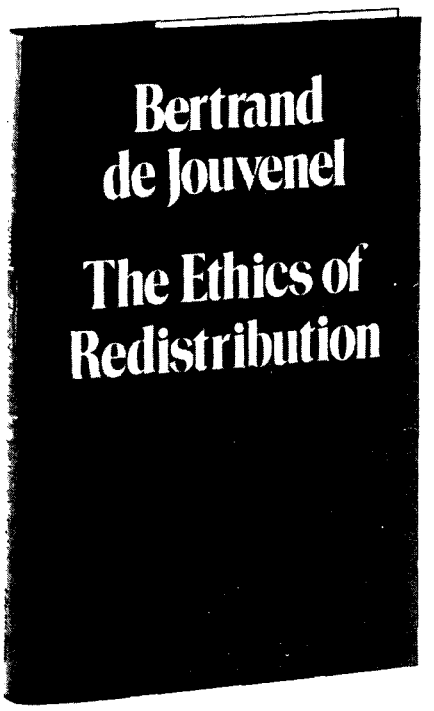

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less, saying of the EC: "When I look at the institutions to which it is proposed that sovereignty be handed over, I'm aghast. Seventeen unelected reject politicians with no accountability to anyone, who are not responsible for raising taxes, just spending money; who are pandered to by a supine parliament which also is not responsible for raising taxes, already behaving with an arrogance I find breathtaking—the idea that one says, 'Okay, we'll give this lot our sovereignty,' is unacceptable to me." Ridley was on target, but he lost his job because he went on, recklessly, to compare Kohl to Hitler and misdiagnosed the EC as a German plot. As I say, the Germans will derail the EC before too long by refusing to continue paying out to the poorer countries.

What's more surprising is the never-ending enthusiasm within the U.S. establishment for a United States of Europe. It goes back decades, and is based on the idea that those fractious countries that have already dragged us into two world wars would all along have been at peace if only they had been one big country, like the U.S. This is not social engineering but world engineering. A ruling theorem of U.S. foreign policy has long been that the world would be a safer place if it consisted of a few superstates transcending nationalism. Small countries are warlike, nationalistic, intolerant, jealous, tribal, ethnic, violent, internecine, dangerous, strife-ridden, and so on. Yet, as Alan Sked points out in a recent issue of the *National Interest* ("Myths of European Unity"), "a strict account of modern European history shows that wars were brought about largely by the refusal of supranational, dynastic states—the Ottoman, Hapsburg, and Napoleonic empires—to allow for national self-determination." Likewise the U.S. Civil War arose because Southern states were denied the right to secede.

In reality, the world seems to be moving in the opposite direction from that fantasized in Brussels and Washington. Countries are fragmenting rather than coalescing. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, even Canada, show signs of breaking apart. This is desirable, surely. Governments today wield excessive power all over the world, and the best hope of freeing people from the bondage of toiling for the unproductive legions on public payrolls is to bring government closer to the people by multiplying the number of countries.

A major thrust of U.S. foreign policy will be to try to forestall this fragmentation; to work for "stability." The Bush Administration talks openly of trying to help Mikhail Gorbachev save the Soviet Union. The *New York Times* recently offered a prescription for preserving Yugoslavia, and the *Washington Post* followed with an editorial entitled "Saving Yugoslavia." (While the country threatens to break apart, the paper worried, "the West sits by, reluctant to offer hand or word.")

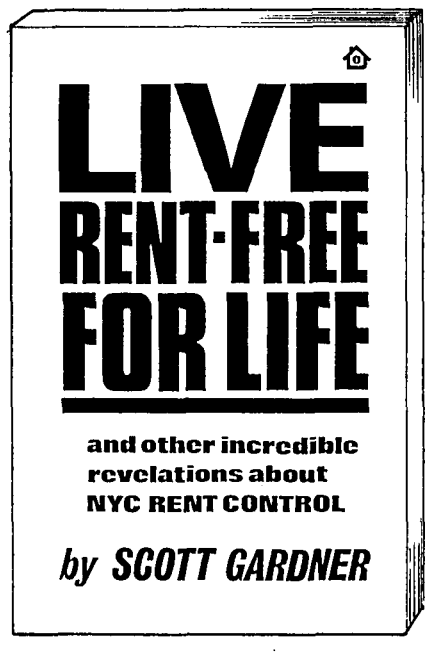
On the day I left England, a real-world reminder was tucked away in the back pages of the *Financial Times*. "Swiss Safe Haven Dictum Holds True," was the headline. "In times of turmoil, Switzerland has always been something of a safe haven. In the shadow of the Gulf crisis the dictum appears to hold true. The Swiss bond market is open for business—but only at a price." Surprise! Switzerland has not joined the European Community, and the Swiss franc will remain outside European monetary union. Of interest also were the "Offshore Managed Funds." These were based in Guernsey, Jersey, the Isle of Man, and Luxembourg. They remind us that "Tax Problems Plague Euro Entrepreneurs," to give a *Daily Telegraph* headline on the same day. Taxes are too high—that's the problem. Does anyone think that one more layer of government is going to solve the problem of excessive government? □

SOCIALISM'S LAST LAUGH

In New York City today, there is no law so untouchable, no social topic as emotionally charged or closed to discussion as *RENT CONTROL*. So when Scott Gardner wrote a book critical of the Big Apple's fifty-year-long "emergency wartime measure," he violated a sacrosanct taboo.

To make matters worse, his book, "*Live Rent-Free For Life,*" is not a dull economic text but a hilarious satire that dares to poke fun at the "humanitarian" system that was supposed to help the poor, but has turned into a free handout for the rich. As a result, this incisive little book has turned into a great big embarrassment for New York and a great big laugh for the rest of the country.

Inspired by his ten year traumatic experience as owner of a small Manhattan townhouse, Gardner discovers a fertile field of comedy no one has ever tapped, and for the first time, reveals the wild and wacky world of rent control in all its bizarre absurdities. But Gardner makes his point with such engaging good humor and comic inventiveness, you actually enjoy the devastation he wreaks among landlords, tenants, bureaucrats, and politicians alike.



In two dozen short essays that range from lampoon to parody to stand-up comedy, he does not hesitate to name names, quote newspaper reports, or even invent fictitious scenarios, each illustrating different facets of rent control's farcical nature.

His chapter titles tell the tale: "Deck The Whores With Boughs of Folly," outlines a tongue-in-cheek proposal to eliminate the world's oldest profession by regulating hooker's fees like rents; "How I Turned $100,000 into $1.25 By Investing In Real Estate In My Spare Time," teaches a foolproof method for retiring directly to the poorhouse; "A Great Leap Backward," reveals the city's 5.1 billion dollar plan to move its poorest citizens UP to grinding, abject poverty; "Creative Real Estate Management," gives you an up-to-date compilation of the latest high-tech methods New York landlords use for getting rid of unwanted tenants; and "An Endangered Species," shows how irate Brooklyn tenants who compared their hated landlord, Morris Gross, to a reptile, did the nation's reptiles a "gross" disservice.

Among many other riotous tidbits is, "Beyond Chaos," a merciless description of a housing agency completely bogged down in inefficiency and red tape, and how this chaos makes it feasible and legal for every New York tenant to stop paying rent forever. And in a diabolical socko finish, "Mein Krampf," delivers a monologue strangely reminiscent of Adolf Hitler's rantings as it describes rent control's "final solution" to the city's age-old "landlord problem."

"*Live Rent-Free*" is the first book ever written that rips the mystique away from the Big Apple's liberal facade and exposes the rotted core of what is perhaps New York's most destructive, possibly its costliest, but certainly its dumbest law.

"At a time in our history," writes Gardner, "when harsh economic reality has made Marxist dogma harder to peddle than radioactive waste, New York's precious rent control may very well be the last surviving example of socialistic claptrap left in the civilized world."

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Anne Applebaum

WHO OWNS CENTRAL EUROPE?

Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians say they are eager to privatize industry. But half-measures in dismantling state monopolies and fears of foreign or *nomenklatura* ownership have put the revolutions of 1989 on hold.

One year after the revolutions, street demonstrations, political changes, and flag wavings of 1989, a few things in Central Europe remain comfortably constant. In Warsaw, the telephones still refuse to work, no matter how often you throw them to the ground. In Budapest, thick, brown clouds of smoke continue to billow gently from the exhaust pipes of buses, leaving the scent of burning diesel fuel in the air. In Prague, it is still possible to waste entire days looking for a single, perfect, accurate statistic, lost somewhere in the mountains of paper hoarded by jealous Czech bureaucrats.

Among these endearing mementos of Communist rule, state property ownership stands out as one of the hardiest. Many other things have disappeared: Communist parties, censorship, secret police, Russian soldiers, price controls and subsidies. Poland has even dispensed with the erstwhile budget deficit and the unconvertible zloty. Yet state enterprises still account for eighty to ninety percent of industrial production in all three countries. The state remains the primary landlord and the most important taxpayer, the greatest debtor and the biggest drain on the budget. So long as the state sector continues to devour (and waste) people, money, and resources, no economic reform will succeed.

Nevertheless, when someone mentions mass privatization—the most fundamental part of economic reform in post-Communist society—politicians everywhere stall, mumble something about "not rushing things," and change the subject. This nervousness is not due to a lack of debate. The press, the parliaments, and the cabinet meetings of Central Europe are full of new words: share, bond, ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Program), limited company, holding company, mutual fund, pension fund, public offering, active and passive investor. Nor is the failure to privatize due to lack of knowledge. Most Central Europeans know that private property is part of "how things are done in the West," and understand, at least intellectually, that private owners make things work better. No, the tendency of otherwise pro-free market governments to stall and hedge on privatization has its roots in two very basic human emotions: fear and envy.

Anne Applebaum is the Economist*'s Warsaw correspondent.*

Fear arises because privatization—far more than democratic elections or a free press—promises to change the social and class structure of Central Europe in unknown ways. Communist ideology taught an entire generation that society consists of workers, peasants, and intellectuals. Communist economies, which prevented anyone from owning anything, produced these three classes. Once privatization begins, this will change. When workers begin to own their shops and offices, when peasants begin to own their land, and when intellectuals join the service industries, the result will be entrepreneurs, farmers, and a new middle class.

So far, the only experiences most Central Europeans have with these new entrepreneurial social classes are their encounters with the ubiquitous black marketeers, mostly Polish, who crowd the train stations, the medieval market squares, and lately the airports of the region, furtively displaying their packages of cigarettes, chewing gum, and matchsticks on small tables. Usually selling imports from the West, sometimes reselling cheaper products from their own bloc, they are unmoved by snow, rain, and police.

Some find the sight of this budding business sector upsetting. "Will we all look like that?" wondered a distressed Hungarian friend of mine. I tried to answer no, but thought twice. Perhaps he was right to worry. Soon, people may find themselves doing things they never imagined, as jobs open up that never existed before. No one would have predicted that so many people would make a living from selling so much junk; no one can tell what new opportunities or disasters the sale of state enterprises—and the accompanying transformation of the working habits, incomes, lifestyles of millions of people—will bring to a given individual. This is where fear comes from: to be completely unable to envision one's future is a terrifying prospect, the equivalent of jumping into a muddy lake without knowing whether there are sharp rocks just below the surface.

Envy—an even stronger sensation than fear—arises because privatization will make some people, but not everybody, very rich. Envy is what makes it impossible for privatization to occur in the fastest and most logical manner: selling enterprises to people who have money. In post-Communist society, the only people who have money are foreigners, returning expatriates, and ex-Communists and their ilk, still known by the ugly Russian word *nomenklatura*. But no one wants to see ex-Communists benefit from democracy, nor do the much-invaded nations of Central Europe particularly care to be reconquered by their old enemies (the Germans) in a new guise.

While perfectly understandable, these emotions do make efficient privatization hard to carry out. Only Hungary has experimented with both sales to foreigners and sales to the *nomenklatura*, which is perhaps why Hungary has sold off more of its state property than any other country. Since the mid-1980s, managers of Hungarian state enterprises have been able to sell shares in their own companies both to foreigners and to other Hungarians. Although not owners, they were allowed to dispense with property as if they were; this resulted in speedy and often corrupt privatization, with managers naturally cutting deals for their own benefit. The process ground to a halt last year, after a series of scandals turned public opinion against this so-called "spontaneous" privatization. In one famous case, the managers of Hungar-hotels, a company which controlled over thirty prime hotel and restaurant properties, sold a controlling stake in the entire concern to a tiny Swedish company for the estimated price of a single hotel. Bribery was suspected, and the Hungarian courts threw the deal out on a technicality. Because, even if the deal had been a good one for the state company, the thought of *nomenklatura* managers and foreigners greedily enriching themselves at the expense of the general public was unpopular.

Because of these early policies, Hungary is now afflicted with what amounts to a national schizophrenia on the subject of state company sales. Within the same month, the Hungarian government called for a mass acceleration of privatization, while at the same time

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blocking a lucrative deal between Hungaroton, the respectable Hungarian state recording concern, and EMI. The government didn't like the old Communist connections of Hungaroton's manager; they didn't like the idea of his getting anything out of the deal, and in general they didn't like the thought of anyone, even EMI, making a profit out of one of the nation's "crown jewels." Official policy may encourage privatization, but envy prevented it from happening in this particular case.

In Poland, envy has also been responsible for the catastrophic overvaluation of state assets, which in turn prevents sales to foreigners. A classic case is that of the famous Gdansk shipyard: "birthplace of Solidarity," and also home to a lot of rotting hulls, mountains of rusty scrap metal, turn-of-the-century brick warehouses, and obsolete machinery. An American millionairess, Barbara Piasecka-Johnson, offered to take a percentage of it off the government's hands for a few million dollars, in return for the right to run it as she pleased. Horrified at the "low" price, and fearing that Mrs. Johnson might make a profit off their labor, the workers refused to approve the deal. (Their confusion was deepened by Mrs. Johnson's phraseology: "I will save the shipyard," she said, not "I will buy it and run it for profit.")

It is not a nostalgia for socialism that is causing governments and companies to hesitate. Even in Vaclav Havel's entourage of ex-hippies and skateboarding rock stars, it is hard to find anyone anywhere who will say, in public, that he believes in an "alternative" to capitalism or a so-called "third way." The stumbling blocks are not ideological, but technical: how to do it, how to do it fairly, how to do it quickly, and how to control it. Some have described the task of mass privatization as the political equivalent of squaring the circle: politicians want to move from socialism to capitalism, while at the same time insuring that no one emerges much better off than anyone else. The transition period—the period of privatization—will be plagued by this dilemma.

The slow progress towards private ownership may have disastrous political and economic consequences. Poland—the nation which leads Central Europe in fiscal, monetary, and currency reform—has already run into most of them. While Hungary and Czechoslovakia have had their difficulties, Poland provides a spectacular example of what can go wrong in the absence of ownership reform.

Poland's economic reform program began bravely enough on January 1, 1990, when Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki's economic team, led by Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, carried out what has become known as either the "Big Bang" reform or simply "The Balcerowicz Plan." The program slashed subsidies, freed prices, liberalized import/export laws, froze wages, hardened the currency, and ultimately cut inflation. The novelty of the reform plan came with Balcerowicz's decision to take several of these steps all at once, whereas in the past, the benefits of one type of reform could be lost due to the absence of another. While the world applauded this plan, which had many immediate positive effects (including Poland's first trade surplus in decades), the Balcerowicz team nevertheless began stalling in mid-1990, and became stuck on the issue of privatization. Rather than going ahead as fast as possible, rather than experimenting with different ways to execute changes in ownership, ministers and deputy ministers squabbled among themselves, each trying to retain as much regulatory control as possible. Although Poland's parliament finally did pass a privatization law last summer, the first companies did not go up for public subscription until November 30. Even now, there is debate about whether public subscription (used to great effect in Britain in the 1980s) is an appropriate way to sell large state companies in a country where few people have any money for investment at all. Faster, but admittedly more haphazard privatization techniques remain untested: worker/management buyouts, direct purchase, company liquidation . . .

The economic consequences of failing to privatize quickly can already be seen in Poland. When prices were freed and demand dropped in response to the monetary squeeze on January 1, 1990, state companies failed to react the way private companies would react in the West. Because most are monopolies, and because managers have a greater interest in keeping their jobs than in making profits, state companies generally preferred to raise prices and cut production in the face of tighter monetary controls and lowered demand. With no competition, and therefore no incentive to sell goods in greater quantities, production simply dropped.

Because of this reaction, natural restructuring has not occurred. Companies have not gone bankrupt, and real unemployment is still astonishingly low. Many companies which should be out of business are still treading water. Without privatization, this process could go on indefinitely; the under-invested economy and infrastructure may be slowly run into the ground. Without privatization, the otherwise excellent Balcerowicz Plan will fail.

But the political consequences of failing to privatize are even more dire. In recent months, the absence of ownership change was the cause of the Polish malaise: the popular complaint that "nothing is happening," that the Communists had disappeared but "nothing is changing." Whereas intellectuals felt the effect of Communism's collapse right away, with the disappearance of censorship and travel restrictions, ordinary people still found themselves living the same lives, doing the same work for the same people, earning the same pay. Poles wanted to feel a real break with the past, and wanted changes in management and work practices to happen faster.

Some have described the task of mass privatization as the political equivalent of squaring the circle: politicians want to move from socialism to capitalism, while at the same time insuring that no one emerges much better off than anyone else.

Just when these complaints were reaching a crescendo, Lech Walesa stepped into the fray and announced he would "speed up" the process of change, "with an axe" if need be. His blunt rhetoric frightened Warsaw intellectuals, but the general direction of his thinking was pro-privatization, rather than anti-reform (as it was sometimes portrayed). At one point during the election, he mumbled something about "giving every Pole ten million zlotys to buy shares." For this he was ridiculed. Yet the idea of giving away free shares, of allowing Poles to buy back Poland, is an acceptably populist, perfectly reasonable way to conduct some—if not all—privatization, particularly in a country where people lack the capital to buy anything, let alone shares. Giveaway plans can make privatization popular, effectively bribing people to accept economic change. But although there were people in Mazowiecki's Finance Ministry already working on such a project, Mazowiecki himself was unable to grasp the potential appeal of such programs.

This failure is part of why voters knocked the former prime minister out of the presidential elections in the first round. It also partly explains the success of the mysterious Peruvian-Canadian-Polish émigré businessman, Stanislaw Tyminski, who came literally from nowhere to cause his defeat. Although Tyminski went on to lose the second-round ballot to Walesa, the Tyminski phenomenon finally brought to Poland's attention the real dangers posed by failure to communicate the goals of economic reform, and in particular the failure to explain and carry out fast privatization. Setting aside the more bizarre aspects of Tyminski's biography (his obsession with Peruvian mysticism, his alleged links to former secret police), the success of his economic rhetoric among 25 percent of the Polish population is reason enough for Polish reformers to worry that the transition period will not be easy.

For Tyminski's message focused on privatization; his words, repeated in a hypnotic monotone, seemed explicitly designed to appeal to the natural emotions—fear and envy again—surrounding ownership change. "Foreigners are buying up your best factories," he hissed at his electoral audience. "The government is betraying you, the government is selling you out, the government is selling factories to foreigners on the cheap," he said, despite the fact that foreign investment in Poland accounts for less than 2 percent of yearly production, and despite the small number of joint venture deals completed in the last year.

"The Balcerowicz Plan is a disaster, the Balcerowicz Plan is destroying Poland," was another of Tyminski's campaign mantras. This he told to uneducated miners, small town dwellers, and farmers, people who have little understanding of monetary reform, and no idea whether Tyminski, in his Western suit and Western tie, might not indeed know better. Perhaps without forethought, Tyminski brought alive their hidden anxieties about capitalism, and especially about privatization; their fear that any change might well be for the worse, their envy of those they believed were already profiting.

Playing on xenophobia and ignorance, Tyminski gathered around himself the closest thing to a counter-revolutionary force that has so far appeared in Central Europe: people who are afraid of reform, afraid of capitalism, and most of all afraid of privatization.

Yet something besides simple ignorance united Tyminski's supporters. Most (like most Poles) own nothing, let alone stocks, companies, shops, or even apartments. Without owning anything, they have no stake in the country's economic progress. Had privatization

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already been underway, had people already felt the beneficial effects surrounding the shift to capitalism, Tyminski's success would not have been possible. Poland's electoral debacle need never have occurred.

But I repeat: I am writing about Poland only because Poland's case is the clearest and most dramatic. Hungary, where privatization remains stalled after the first failed experiments, and Czechoslovakia, where the government is afraid to begin, will run into similar difficulties sooner or later. In the Soviet Union, fear of privatization has helped block reform altogether. In Yugoslavia, disastrous experiments with odd forms of worker ownership have led to virtual economic and political collapse.

In the West, the significance of privatization and the debate over privatization techniques in Central and Eastern Europe are often given short shrift. Living in economies dominated by private business, we are used to thinking of economic reform in terms of monetary policy or taxes. In Central Europe, these are secondary issues. The focus of reform has to be on privatization and the creation of good conditions for private business, or reform will fail, economically and politically.

Capitalism is a tough system to live in; people, fearful and envious, have to be bribed to accept it. Conducted with intelligence and political skill, privatization can become such a bribe, whether through the distribution of shares, by allowing peasants to buy their land and workers to buy their warehouse, whether through auctions, public subscriptions, and a few sales to foreigners. The mass sale of state industry represents an unprecedented political and economic opportunity for Central European governments. They must be encouraged to use it, before demagogy fills the gap where ownership should be. □

David Frum

A POORHOUSE DIVIDED

Conservatives can be the champions of the poor, but they're of two minds on how to go about it: offer economic incentives, or impose the mores of middle-class America? The views are irreconcilable—and perhaps untenable.

A conservative war on poverty—that was Jack Kemp's promise when he was sworn in as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development two years ago. "Empowerment" of the poor under a "New Paradigm"—that is the promise of the brainier White House aides today. In December, two of the champions of the Republican right, Kemp and former education secretary and drug czar William Bennett, jointly endorsed the New Paradigm at the Republican governors' convention in North Carolina. But profound peace still reigns on the poverty front, and the poor remain stuck in the same old paradigm as ever.

Republican conservatives think they know whom to blame for the failure of the Bush Administration to fulfill the promise of bold action against poverty: the detested budget director, Richard Darman. But the fundamental reason why conservatives can't seem to act on a common anti-poverty program is that conservative thinking about poverty is divided into two schools, schools so incompatible that nothing but the universal hatred for Darman could keep their adherents in the same room for long. And the two men whose approaches to poverty are most radically incompatible are, curiously, those two momentary comrades-in-arms, Kemp and Bennett.

The school for which Kemp speaks argues that the 13 percent of Americans who are poor are basically the same as everybody else. They like and dislike the same things as their richer fellow citizens, share the same values, and react the same way to incentives and disincentives. But while the incentives and disincentives presented to most Americans lead them toward work and self-respect, the temptations the welfare state dandles in front of the poor lure them toward idleness, ignorance, and irresponsibility. This is the thesis of Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* and of the domestic policy researchers at the Heritage Foundation.

"America is not divided immutably into two static classes," Kemp said in a June speech to Heritage. "But it *is* separated or divided into two economies. One economy—our mainstream economy—is democratic capitalist, market-oriented, entrepreneurial, and incentivized for working families whether in labor or management. This mainstream rewards work, investment, saving, and productivity. . . . But there is another economy—a second economy that is similar in respects to the Eastern European or Third World 'socialist' economy . . . and it predominates in the pockets of poverty throughout urban and rural America. This economy has barriers to productive human and social activity and a virtual absence of economic incentive and rewards . . ."

Fortunately, he concluded, "good policy can lead to results." By reformulating welfare programs, amending the tax code, subsidizing intact families instead of broken ones, privatizing public housing, and introducing more choice into education, "productive human effort can be promoted, behavior can be modified or altered. Work effort can be unleashed. The forces that cause poverty can be reversed." The "power" that the "empowerers" want to give the poor is choice—the same choice that everyone else has—in the confidence that the poor are no more likely to choose wrong than anyone else is.

The Bennett school—call its adherents the "culturalists" to distinguish them from Kemp's economistic conservatives—looks at things more gloomily. Poverty exists in rich America precisely because some people do not react to incentives and disincentives in the way that everybody else does. They lack the attitudes and skills necessary to keep a job, run a business, or hold together a family. They form an "underclass" trapped in a "culture of poverty."

The Kempites are right, say the Bennettites, that the poor are poor because they make bad choices. But the Bennettites disagree that economic incentives will suffice to correct the behavior of the poor. "The rehabilitation of community cannot begin until some degree of fundamental order and basic stability has been established," Bennett told the National Newspaper Association last March. If the poor are to escape poverty, or at least live in less squalor and danger, they must absorb the attitudes and values that enabled so many other Americans to ascend into the middle class. What's needed is what Bennett doesn't hesitate to call "moral reform." And since many poor people show no signs of reforming on their own, the middle-class majority must forcibly inculcate those values and attitudes into them. This is the thesis of the most persuasive intellectual among the culturalists, UCLA's James Q. Wilson. "If we wish to address the problems of family disruption, welfare dependency, crime in the streets, educational inadequacy, or even public finance properly understood," Wilson wrote in the *Public Interest*, "the government, by the mere fact that it defines these states of affairs as problems, acknowledges that human character is, in some degree, defective and that it intends to alter it."

The implications of culturalism are radical, and the culturalists do not flinch from them. Chester Finn, a former assistant secretary of education when Bennett was secretary, declared in an April speech in St. Paul, "I believe we are going to have to be prepared more frequently to remove children from their homes and send them to other settings. . . . When a family is in a condition of melt-down, our priority must be to help the children. Parents do not always know best . . ."

Although the adherents of the two schools write for the same magazines and vote for the same presidential candidates, their views are incompatible. If Kemp is right that people like Kimi Gray—the Washington welfare mother and tenant organizer he calls "my hero"—are representative of the urban

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poor, and that the poor need only to have their incentives restructured for them to cease being poor, then the culturalist program is nothing better than impertinent interference in the private lives of people perfectly capable of taking care of themselves. But if Bennett and Wilson are right, then Kemp's economic nostrums are mere tinkering. Cut taxes, sell off public housing to the tenants, and break up the public school system, and the poor will still lounge on street corners, illiterate, idle, addicted, and violent.

The culturalists stress that America's poor don't lack for choices. What they lack is the capacity to make the right ones. Midge Decter told a Heritage Foundation symposium in 1984, "The one disagreement that I think I have with George Gilder [author of the economistic *Wealth and Poverty*] is the idea that if there were no welfare programs, [teenage mothers] wouldn't be having babies. . . . They aren't having babies on purpose exactly, they have just utterly given up control of their own destinies. . . . What is needed is not a new government program, but a new ethos —one in which these little girls will be encouraged to keep their knees together until they grow up and find husbands."

Creating an ethos is difficult, maybe impossible; amending laws is easy. There, in a sentence, is much of the appeal of the economistic school. It promises that Congress could lick poverty in a legislative session or two, because all that needs to change are laws. The toilsome research of culturalist academics, from Oscar Lewis and Edward Banfield onward, into the pathologies and distortions that keep people poor could be obviated by the painless magic of the marketplace: enterprise zones, tax cuts, privatization of public housing.

Culturalism, on the other hand, is very strong medicine. Worse, it carries a whiff of white-middle-class self-approbation. That self-approbation may well be justified, but it has to be anathema to a politician who is, like Kemp, trying to build a conservative constituency among blacks. Although two-thirds of America's 32 million poor people are white and more than half of America's blacks are not poor, criticism of the culture of the poor is almost universally interpreted as criticism of the culture of blacks. So Kemp and his school prefer to speak of poverty as a problem somehow external to the characters of the poor themselves, one which the poor can overcome on their own—with, naturally, a little help from a Republican Congress.

If the differences between Kempites and Bennettites were merely intellectual, they could perhaps be fudged. Fudging intellectual differences in order to build political coalitions is, after all, what politicians do for a living. But the difference between a politician who hopes to win votes among the poor and one who hopes to win votes among those dismayed by the poor is not so fudgeable.

Republicans are chipping their teeth on the same nutshell that sent Democrats to the orthodontist: the inability to decide what kind of a problem poverty is. And, so long as they cannot make up their minds, they are vulnerable to the sort of fratricide that has so often rent the Democratic party. The dilemma can be traced back to the Progressive Era. The roaring economy of the years before the First World War had propelled so many Americans into comfort that, for the first time, benevolent people could entertain the idea that poverty was somehow abnormal. This thought seemed especially plausible in the booming cities of the Northeast and Midwest, where the poor were disproportionately likely to be recent immigrants and the well-to-do were typically old-stock Yankees. City-dwellers came to associate poverty with jabbering foreign tongues and alien ways. It was an easy jump to the conclusion that Americanizing the poor would in itself depauperize them.

The result was the settlement house. When it was coined in England in the 1880s, the term referred to a settlement by educated people among the poor: rich university students would move into a poor neighborhood. The students and their neighbors would—the theory went—learn from one another and work together for social reform. But in America, the teaching went strictly one way. Alumni of the movement—Harold Ickes, Frances Perkins, and Harry Hopkins among them—imported its basic assumptions into the federal and state welfare programs created or vastly enlarged in the 1930s and 1940s. To the settlement house can be traced the New Deal's faith in social work and its willingness to entrust broad discretionary power to social workers, its presumption that the problem of poverty was essentially a problem of assimilation, its unspoken prejudice that some groups were more assimilable than others, and finally its zeal to rip down slums and move their inhabitants into housing projects.

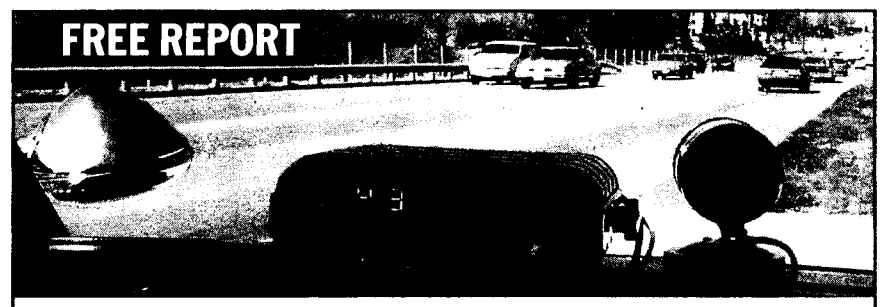
Such habits of thought did not impinge very much on the beneficiaries of the New Deal's emergency measures—like public works—or of its social insurance programs. But the non-working poor, the people who would remain poor when the Depression lifted, bore the full weight of the settlement house legacy. Well-heeled opponents of the New Deal complained bitterly about its snooping and its meddlesomeness. Paradoxically, though, the Americans who most felt a new, arbitrary power in their lives after 1940 were not bankers and brokers, but welfare recipients. Social Security pensioners, trade union members, and TVA customers were left free to enjoy the fruits of the New Deal in any way they liked, but the non-working poor were scrutinized by the welfare authorities as never before. If their stove tops weren't clean enough or if their sexual conduct was improper, they could, at a social worker's word, be tossed out of their housing project or cut off the welfare rolls.

This New Deal culturalism would seem at first glance to have worked. The urban poor of the 1950s did conform to middle-class expectations much more closely than the urban poor of the 1990s do, or than those of the 1900s did. The statistics on crime, illegitimacy, and substance abuse in the early 1950s look positively Kansan. And between 1940 and 1965, the proportion of Americans living under the poverty line dropped by two-thirds, from about 35 percent (Roosevelt's "one-third of a nation") to just under 13 percent, slightly below today's figure. Of course, it was the great postwar economic growth, and not New Deal welfarism, that propelled all these people off the welfare rolls. But at least New Deal welfare programs seem not to have gotten in the way. The 1980s boom, by contrast, reduced poverty in America by just one percentage point, to some 13 percent by 1990.

The more people it hoisted out of poverty, the more the great postwar economic takeoff made whatever poverty remained look anomalous and even un-American. At the same time, affluence put Americans into a generous, self-confident mood. One of the arguments for the liberal War on Poverty was that it would dispose of the federal government's seemingly chronic budget surpluses.

It's hard to remember now, but the Great Society of the 1960s originated as an anti-statist critique of the New Deal. To refute the case for an interventionist welfare bureaucracy, the Great Society adopted a variant of the economistic explanation of poverty: the poor were poor because they lacked money. Give them more, and they would immediately cease to be poor—without state supervision, without bossy social workers, and without any suggestion that other people knew better how they ought to lead their lives. Once the money was in their hands, everything else—housing, business opportunities, economic clout—would follow, just as political power for the formerly disenfranchised had ineluctably followed the enactment of the Voting Rights Act.

The Democrats' war on poverty was going to be as hostile to bureaucracy as a congressman on the campaign trail. The transfer of economic resources would be overseen not by professionals from Washington or Albany or Sacramento, but by the poor themselves, through local community action groups —with, perhaps, a government-paid facilitator or two. The crowning Great Society anti-poverty device, the Negative Income Tax, eliminated all bureaucracy and moralism from welfare. Everyone who fell below the poverty line would, via checks from the IRS, be boosted



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above it. Fittingly, the negative tax was designed by the libertarian economist Milton Friedman, and sent to Congress by President Nixon. Though the negative tax never became law, the right of welfare recipients to do as they pleased without answering to a social worker was vastly enhanced throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

We all know how it came out. Just as the New Deal dream of kindly bureaucrats gently directing the poor into majority society had turned into what Yale professor Charles Reich called a "new serfdom," the Great Society dream that poor people would empower themselves turned into promiscuous check-writing by the federal government.

The Great Society went wrong for three major reasons. First, the self-organization the Johnson Administration promoted turned out to be not the pooling of family and community resources into shops and businesses, but political pressure for government handouts. Second, the Great Society failed to anticipate the perverse side-effects of handing money out to people who have done nothing to earn it. Third, while the Great Society was showering money on the poor, the Supreme Court was with childlike glee smashing to bits traditional methods of maintaining law and order.

Between 1961, the year of *Mapp* v. *Ohio*, and 1965, the year of *Miranda*, the court struck at the ability of localities to detect, arrest, and convict criminals. Then, in 1969, it handed down *Goldberg* v. *Kelly*, the decision that Justice Brennan says he is proudest of. *Goldberg* ruled that local welfare authorities could not remove people from the rolls without a formal hearing beforehand. The discretionary power that the New Deal had so insouciantly vested in social workers was ripped away. Soon after, the due process revolution seized schools, housing projects, prisons. In every place where the state met poor people, it found itself hobbled by complex new rules, and the poor outfitted with expansive new rights.

It must have been exhilarating to tell the social worker to go to hell when she asked whether you were sharing your bed with anyone, to snap your fingers at the police when they hassled you for loitering, to know that the schoolteacher could not whack your kids whenever he felt like it, to throw a party in your apartment without worrying that you might lose your home if the music got too loud. But then you would start to notice that other people, dangerous people, had those rights too, and that the institutions on which you most depended were crumbling under the pressure.

However much they may have learned from the errors of the past, conservative culturalists share the original sin of the New Deal social workers: the desire to use the state to regenerate the poor. It's theoretically possible, of course, that such a campaign of regeneration could occur without the use of state power at all. James Q. Wilson believes that the moral tone of American society improved between 1830 and the Civil War, and gives credit not to governments but to the new "Sunday schools, public schools, temperance movements, religious revivals, YMCAs, [and] the Children's Aid Society . . ." To be sure, even in the nineteenth century reformers spent at least as much of their time lobbying for state action —prohibition of liquor, laws against vice, interception of lewd postcards and contraceptive advertisements sent by mail—as they did founding libraries. And today, hollering for the government whenever a social problem pops up has become irresistible to conservatives and liberals alike. Few culturalists seem inclined even to try to resist. They are instead agreeing with one of the most effective popularizers of culturalist ideas, George F. Will, that "statecraft is soulcraft" —that remodeling citizens' consciousnesses is indeed a legitimate task of the state.

Poverty exists in America precisely because some people do not react to incentives in the way that everybody else does.

The Kempites have had no better success than the culturalists in solving the big problems they inherited from their liberal counterparts. Even if better incentives *would* draw the poor into productive activity, devising those incentives would be complicated and expensive. It's seldom the case that someone is left without work because there is no job at all available to him. People don't work—and take welfare if they can get it—because the smallest wage they will accept exceeds the wage that their labor is worth to an employer. The more libertarian of the economistic conservatives —Charles Murray, and Stuart Butler of the Heritage Foundation, to name two —therefore suggest that a new anti-poverty program should dismantle the disincentives to low-wage work built into anti-poverty programs. Bigger spenders, such as Kemp, seem actually to want to use subsidies to enrich the rewards of labor for those at the bottom of the income heap.

Offering additional incentives to the poor to enter middle class society can have perverse effects. Consider the impact of one of Kemp's favorite reforms, privatizing public housing, on two single mothers, both living in Washington, D.C., with two children. Ms. A lives on welfare. She receives $4,908 in cash annually, as well as $260 a month in food stamps. She pays $99 a month —$1,188 a year—for a two-bedroom apartment. After food and rent, she is left with $3,720 a year in discretionary income. Ms. B, by contrast, holds a job at a warehouse. She earns $13,100 a year. She owes no net federal income tax—in fact, she's entitled to a $760 credit—but she does pay $1,002 in Social Security taxes, plus $389 in District of Columbia taxes. She is not eligible for food stamps, and to rent space equivalent to that which the welfare recipient gets for $99 she pays something in the vicinity of $400. After taxes and rent (and assuming she spends the same $260 a month on food as the government provides Ms. A), she is left with $4,549 a year in discretionary income—$829 more than the woman who takes handouts.

If, on top of everything else, Ms. A were to get ownership of her apartment at a discount and Ms. B did not, the Ms. Bs of the world are going to feel like suckers. If the eligibility threshold is raised to include Ms. B in the program, then Ms. C, who earns $18,000, is going to be aggrieved. If Ms. C. is included, then Ms. D, at $25,000, will be left out. And so on, all the way up to David Rockefeller.

Clever economists say that these effects can be corrected by phasing benefits out and phasing taxes in very slowly along the income slope. This solution is not only enormously costly to the Treasury; it has the perverse side effect of swelling the number of people who are in some way dependent on government handouts for their livelihood. Calibrating social benefits so that they will elicit exactly the desired response and no other from the target population is the sort of project the late B. F. Skinner might assign himself. But the party of Calvin Coolidge?

So how do conservatives, economistic or cultural, clamber out of this swamp? By retracing the fatal path which brought liberals into it: overconfidence about the power of government to do good. Conservatives have stuck themselves with a choice between the Kempites' assumptions—whether they be starry-eyed or politically calculating about the cause of poverty—and the Bennettites' grim conclusions about its solution. But it's not true that government can do nothing for the poor: what it could do is make poverty in America less awful.

America's cities are more dangerous than those of any other industrial democracy. And the poorer you are, the more the violence touches you. As I write, my morning newspaper tells me of ten people who were shot when a man tried to kill his girlfriend on a Bronx street. Neither the gunman nor the victims were white and nobody was killed, so the mass shooting only made page B1, below the fold. But the poor don't share the *New York Times*'s stoic indifference to the carnage around them. They see crime the Republican way: as a problem that can be solved, if it can be solved at all, by police and judges, jailers and executioners. "I don't care if I see a soldier on every corner," an Oakland woman told the *Wall Street Journal* last year, "as long as I know my child will be able to get to school and back home safely."

Making it safe for poor people to get to the food store and back would be no small achievement. An even bigger one would be protecting them from congressional pickpockets along the way. Almost everything that modern government does is paid for by higher taxes on—or higher prices for—the poorest people in the country. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that barriers to the import of foreign clothes, textiles, and shoes—barriers enthusiastically backed, by the way, by the founder of the Conservative Opportunity Society, Newt Gingrich—cost the poorest 20 percent of American families some 8 percent of their disposable income. Farm price supports cost the average poor family not only in taxes but at the supermarket as well. Student loans, commuter-rail subsidies, and grants to the arts all disproportionately benefit the well-off. And the federal government's use of the surplus in the Social Security trust fund to finance general spending means that much of the cost of those boondoggles is being paid for by taxes on earnings of less than $53,400.

The handouts that government dispenses to the poor do not remotely compensate for the costs government imposes on them by its services to grubby interest groups. Lifting the burden of government regulation from the necks of the poor and stricter policing of the places in which they live ought to be an ambitious enough program for any conservative. □

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Vol. 8, No. 13 233 Broadway, New York, New York 10279 (212) 608-7994 JULY 6, 1990

O&Y under the glass

To sell short the Reichmann family of Toronto would seem to be, in almost equal measure, unprofitable and impertinent. The Reichmanns have built one of the world's great real-estate fortunes. They are the No. 1 landlord in New York City. They have accumulated sizable assets in energy, newsprint and retailing. They are, at this very minute, building the largest commercial real-estate project in the world: the Canary Wharf complex in east London on a New Jersey-style industrial tract known as the Isle of Dogs. What Sam Walton is to retailing or Nolan Ryan is to pitching, the Reichmanns are to building. . . .

This is a speculative piece on the Reichmann enterprise and its significance in the unfolding credit drama. Speculate we must, for O&Y is closely held, and the details of the family's finances are guarded. But enough is known to convey a sense of the magnitude of the family's achievement and to prompt a debt-minded observer to ask, in this time of real-estate peril, "Now what?"

If, as we think, the world is taking a deflationary turn, the evidence is bound to show up in even the Reichmann's finances. In a true deflation—a general decline in asset prices—adjustments would be forced on everyone. It wouldn't matter whether the leveraged owner of land or buildings or natural resources was soft-spoken and retiring (the O&Y style) or loud and boastful. The only thing that would matter would be the burden of compound interest, which is punitive.

Probably the Reichmanns would not put it just this way, but they have invested in inflation. They own controlling interests in Gulf Canada Resources, Canada's largest oil and gas company, Abitibi-Price, the world's biggest newsprint maker, and Consumers' Gas Co., Canada's largest natural-gas distribution utility. Similarly, they are long financial activity: They own real- estate in the money centers of New York, Toronto and London. Also, in effect, they are long financial leverage. They have invested in Campeau Corp. and Landmark Land, both of which are highly leveraged (you've heard about Campeau). Gulf Canada Resources, their largest portfolio investment, showed a ratio of earnings to fixed charges in the March quarter of 2:1. In April, Moody's cut its commercial paper rating to P-2 from P-1, and in the same month Standard & Poor's put the company's senior debt under surveillance for a possible downgrade. Moody's rates the senior debt Baa1, or low investment grade.

In sum, the Reichmanns have cast their lot with the world of the 1970s and 1980s, a fabulously profitable world but one that is changing fast. They have bet that asset values will continue to rise and that the structure of debt will remain intact. . . .

What no outsider can know is the significance of the office-building slump to the Reichmanns' finances. In New York, a deep bear market is under way downtown, and midtown seems headed in the same direction. No. 59 Maiden Lane was nearly full when O&Y issued $200 million in Eurobonds to finance it in 1985, but is no longer. The Reichmanns' tolerance for vacant space must depend on their financial strength: by how much they have mortgaged low-cost assets to finance the acquisition of high-cost assets. If O&Y is suffering a bout of negative carry (i.e, if the cost of its assets is greater than the cash yield of its assets), how long can that go on?

Longer than the average married man could begin to imagine, Paul Reichmann seemed to suggest in a *Financial Times* interview last January "...(E)arly years with low income do not disturb us," said Reichmann concerning Canary Wharf. The headline over the piece beckoned optimistically: "The developer who looks a decade ahead."

Everybody would like to extend his investment horizon. It is the bankers and margin clerks and institutional investors who refuse to allow it. Under what financial constraints do the Reichmanns operate? How leveraged are they? How leveraged—if markets take their expected, deflationary turn—might they become? . . .

To paraphrase the politician, a few hundred million dollars here and a few hundred million dollars there, and pretty soon you're talking about real money. Paul Reichmann is no Donald Trump, but Reichmann, too, is in the asset-appreciation business.

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Adrian Karatnycky

THE EMPIRE STRIKES OUT

The Kremlin vs. Russia, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldavia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, et al.

All around the Soviet Union are the signs of an empire in retreat. In Moscow and Leningrad, residents queue endlessly for bread, cigarettes, and gasoline. Despite a bumper crop, the Soviet harvest is down from 1989, due in part to the catastrophic state of farm equipment: 120,000 harvesters stand idle for lack of spare parts. That's only the beginning of the bad news. In the first half of 1990, economic production fell by 2 percent and worker productivity by 1.5 percent. In August industrial production fell by a further 1.7 percent, suggesting an annual drop of 20 percent. Strikes have increased by 300 percent in the last year, to an annual rate of 20 million lost work days.

In an August 29 article in *Izvestia*, S. Alekseyev, head of the USSR legislature's Constitutional Oversight Committee, admitted that the body's work "has found itself temporarily paralyzed" in the face of proclamations of national sovereignty or outright independence by most republics. "The real events of political life have brought [the USSR] to a point beyond which general paralysis, general incapacity, and the withering and collapse of the Union and all its institutions and subdivisions begin."

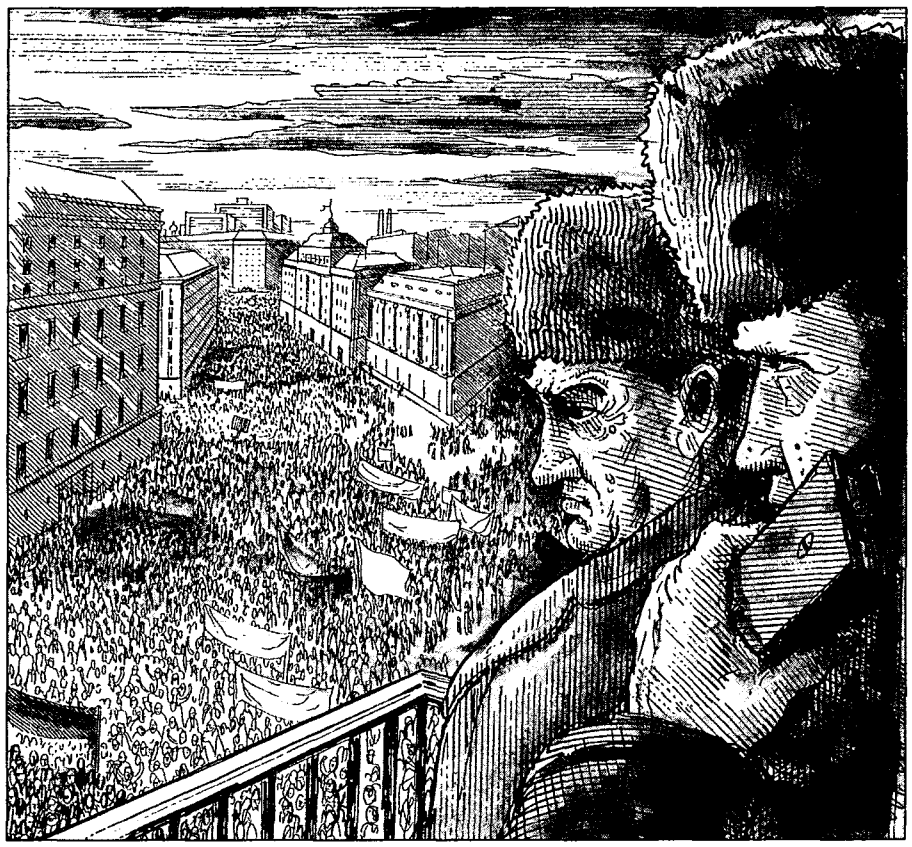
Parallel power, exercised through city, territorial, and republic councils (soviets), is rapidly eroding the prerogatives of the center. In Moscow and Leningrad, in the Baltic states, and in large parts of the Ukraine including Kiev and Lvov, nationalists and democrats are in control of education, public works, and large segments of the mass media. As in 1917, power is lying in the streets and it is the patriotic democratic movements that are grabbing it. At a recent hearing on Capitol Hill, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who correctly predicted the collapse of totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe, asserted: "The Soviet Union is doomed; it will not endure and will probably cease to exist as we know it in a few years."

On the evidence of recent days, Brzezinski's daring prediction may prove insufficiently bold. From Alma-Ata in the shadows of the Tien Shan Mountains to Tallinn on the shores of the Baltic, the USSR has been swept by public protest and reanimated nationalism. Crowds of as many as one million Armenians and Azerbaijanis have swelled the public squares of their capital cities. Two million Lithuanians, Estonians, and Latvians have linked arms in a human chain along the Baltic littoral. Additional hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have commemorated the anniversary of the 1918 proclamation of their country's independence.

The USSR now confronts a massive refugee problem, with 600,000 displaced citizens in search of permanent housing and new jobs. Some 240,000 of these refugees are Armenians and 190,000 are Azerbaijanis driven out of Armenia. Tens of thousands are Russians who fled Baku after riots last January. Soon, untold thousands may be fleeing wetsward.

A mood of crisis appears to have infected the upper rungs of the Soviet establishment. On November 26, the USSR Supreme Soviet described the state of affairs thusly: "The situation in the country continues to deteriorate and is approaching a critical situation. . . . The acuteness of inter-ethnic relations has acquired a dangerous nature. Disintegration is occurring in the structure of executive power. . . . An extreme situation has taken shape in the country, which demands the adoption of radical measures." On November 28, President Gorbachev warned a group of the USSR's leading official cultural figures of mounting "anarchy" and "counter-revolution" that have resulted in "the paralysis of executive power." He intoned in dire, if familiar, terms: "We must not be divided. . . . If we start splitting there will be war. There will be conflict, there will be a dreadful war."

Such fears of violence are overdrawn, part of the center's last desperate argument against the forces of democratic nationalism. In fact, ethnic violence has been limited to the Soviet south, and is the by-product of intense poverty occasioned by malign neglect from Moscow. Even in Central Asia, it is the national democratic movements and not the presence of the Red Army or the USSR's militia that has injected a climate of peaceful discourse and stability into political life.



Today political forces favoring national sovereignty either possess an outright parliamentary majority or command the support of public opinion. Even parliaments with a Communist majority are seeking to preempt pro-independence forces by declaring "national sovereignty" and "the primacy of local laws." In Armenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia nationalist forces already dominate republic legislatures. In November elections, pro-independence parties led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia captured more than 70 percent of the vote in Georgia. A coalition of pro-independence groups and insurgent independent miners' organizations now commands broad public support in the Ukraine. And in the aftermath of last January's brutal military occupation of Baku, the Azerbaijani Popular Front enjoys overwhelming popularity.

Even in the Russian republic, Boris Yeltsin is pressing for a sovereign Russian state within the context of a "comity" or "confederation" of nations in which the central state authorities would be responsible only for the coordination

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of defense and the maintenance of a unitary currency. He favors a limited central government that would coordinate what amounts to an economic union of sovereign states.

In an August 8 interview with *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Yeltsin was outspoken in his criticism of the Soviet empire. He called for "normal relations, not slave relations" between countries and denounced the Gorbachev policy of blockading republics making a dash for independence. "With regard to Lithuania, it is a major political mistake," Yeltsin declared. "For there was no such blockade against Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or the GDR. And this is right. If a people strives for independence, you cannot restrain them by force. And the more pressure the authorities exert, the stronger the people's resistance will be." In the months that followed, Yeltsin took the lead in defending the Russian Federation and other republics from the centralizing tendencies of the Kremlin. "The Russian republic is a state, a sovereign state, and it must have all functions of power," he asserted in a November interview.

Yeltsin has emerged as the USSR's single most popular politician. He is popular in his home base of Russia and he is popular in the non-Russian republics, where he is seen as a proponent of voluntary union, thus of independence. A mid-July poll of 2,680 citizens by a Soviet public opinion concern shows that 61.3 percent approved fully of Yeltsin's activities, with 21 percent not fully approving, and only 5.3 percent not approving at all. For Gorbachev, the poll registered 28.5 percent as fully approving, 40 percent not fully approving, and 19.5 percent not approving at all. And in a head-to-head popularity contest, 34.2 percent of Soviet citizens named Yeltsin, while 10.2 percent named Gorbachev, and only 2.7 percent embattled Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov. The poll's results have yet to be published in the Soviet press.

Support is mounting for national self-determination, including secession, among Russians. A poll conducted last February, primarily in Russian cities, showed that 52.5 percent of those polled supported the right of republics to secede from the USSR. Another 14 percent partly endorsed this right. Only 7 percent were clearly opposed. By the fall of 1990, sentiment for secession was dominant in most of the republics. According to a poll released in late October by the All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion, among Ukrainians support for secession stood at 55 percent for and 26 percent against, with the balance undecided. Russians in the Ukraine also backed secession by a margin of 46 to 38 percent. In Russia itself, 44 percent of Russians favored secession, with 41 percent opposed. The majorities for independence were overwhelming among Georgians (92 percent for, 1 against) and among the indigenous peoples of the Baltic states (91–1 percent). More surprising is that fully 41 percent of Russians in the Baltics favored secession, with 50 percent opposed. And in Byelorussia, Russians were even more supportive of secession than the indigenous Byelorussians (by 55–33 percent *vs.* 42–41 percent). Soviet citizens of most nationalities have come to recognize that the hyper-centralization and gigantism of the economic structures of the union must be dismantled and that the republics' best chance to escape the stranglehold of the old order will be by going it alone. Only in the Asian republics is secession opposed by a majority (54-24 percent) of the indigenous peoples, with a slightly lower margin among Russians.

It is an open question whether the recent rhetorical hard line is evidence of Gorbachev's readiness to use force to defeat democratic separatists.

Demographics, too, portends a breakup. Census statistics for 1989 show two broad trends: the proportional decline of the ethnically Russian population; and the return of large numbers of Russians to their ancestral land—European Russia. In the last ten years some two million Russians and other Slavs have migrated out of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. Even in the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Moldavia, and Byelorussia, the growth of the Russian population began to slow in the 1980s. Russian flight and high birth rates have made the republics of the Turkic Soviet south more ethnically specific. As the numerical and proportional strength of the non-Russians increases, so does their national assertiveness.

Nationalist movements have a number of inequities to point to as they mobilize public support. There are great imbalances in the living standards of the republics, particularly between the Russian and non-Russian. Although it accounts for a little over half the USSR's population, Russia holds more than 61 percent of all fixed assets. And though prices throughout the USSR have historically been uniform, Russians earn 11 percent more than their non-Russian counterparts. Among agricultural workers, the gap is far wider. More significantly, statistics measuring the per capita purchases of food, clothing, electronics, cars, and other consumer goods show a 30 percent advantage for residents of Russia. Similar inequities are found in infant mortality, health care facilities, access to cultural amenities, book publishing, and the press.

Even in the relatively prosperous Slavic Ukraine, the basis for local grievance is great. According to University of Cincinnati professor of finance Z. L. Melnyk, some 20 percent of the national income of the Ukraine has been transferred out of the republic, a level he says "is unprecedented in international economic relations." Such issues, which have been seized on by leaders of the Ukrainian Popular Movement (*Rukh*), resonate not only among ethnic Ukrainians, who constitute 37 million of the republic's citizens, but among its 11 million Russians and half a million Jews.

Among the peoples of the Soviet south, a new movement for national sovereignty based on pan-Turkism rather than Islam, is gaining rapid acceptance among the intelligentsia and the working classes of the Kazakh, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, and Kirghiz peoples. Several Turkic republics are reintroducing Latin script.

The rise of the USSR's long suppressed nations and nationalisms could perhaps be managed by as resourceful a politician as Mikhail Gorbachev. But, amid mounting economic and political setbacks and evidence of military dissension, it appears a hopeless task.

The Communist party itself is rent by growing disunity. In the six months before the defections of Boris Yeltsin and the mayors of Moscow and Leningrad last year, the party suffered a net loss of 770,000 members, about 5 percent of its membership. And, as one leading party official admitted, "A certain concern is caused by the fact that there are very few young people among the new party members." Ivan Polozkov, the reactionary leader of the Russian Communist party, has revealed that, as a result of declining membership and collapsing revenues, the Russian party will be forced to lay off at least half of its 120,000 full-time workers, despite an anticipated subsidy of 285 million rubles from the central CPSU. Increasingly, the party is breaking up into factions, with one, the Marxist Platform, espousing a backward-looking orthodoxy and another, the Democratic Platform, leading an exodus of disgruntled reformers.

In each of the republics, once-loyalist parties are coming under pressure of local nationalisms and distancing themselves from the imperial center. Already the Communist parties in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have left Moscow's orbit, and those in Georgia and Armenia have been taken up by nationalist passions. Pressed by a resurgent Ukrainian patriotism and driven by the revival of national Communism, the hard-line Communist chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, Leonid Kravchuk, asserted on September 8: "We do not intend to create a unitary state, but a commonwealth of free, sovereign, socialist states." The USSR's central functions will be strictly limited, said the Ukrainian leader, to "six or seven areas," with the right of "recalling" powers from the center or "seceding" if "anything goes wrong." There will be no need for a USSR Constitution: "only Union republics will have constitutions."

The Soviet military, in which the majority of recruits are non-Russian, may no longer be a reliable instrument for quelling nationalist unrest. In 1989, 6,500 young men failed to appear for military duty, the lion's share of them from the Baltic states, where pro-independence forces encourage resistance to service in the "army of occupation." In last summer's military call-up, draft dodging was massive: in Armenia only 7.5 percent of the expected recruits turned up, in Georgia 27.5 percent, in Lithuania 33 percent, in Estonia 40 percent, and in Latvia 54 percent. By the fall of 1990, in the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Kirghizia, more than 35,000 (10 percent) of the expected draftees had failed to appear, and there had been over 3,500 desertions. →

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DEAD BEETS

Polkhovsky Sovkhoz, a Soviet state farm about fifty flat miles south of Moscow, has been officially designated a "*sovkhoz*-millionaire," meaning that it is among the most prosperous collective farms in the USSR. That really does not explain why a recent clear October day found a couple of dozen Russians, an American colleague, and me bouncing along the pockmarked road to this model establishment to help in the last-ditch effort to harvest its cabbage crop.

Our *kompania* was composed mostly of middle-aged women lured by the promise, new last fall, that they could bring home as many cabbages as they could carry. They interpreted that license quite liberally, with some lugging back as many as four bulging burlap bags weighing about eighty pounds each. The five men on our bus and the two we met at the *sovkhoz*, seemed content to stand around and smoke, occasionally lobbing a cabbage into the open truck.

At first, none of our fellow workers were aware that two Americans were in their midst, but we inadvertently made our presence known. Although we had never picked cabbages before, we quickly outstripped the desultory pickers in the next row. Soon I was being peppered with questions. "Where are you from? Do they still gather cabbages by hand in California?"

I felt honor-bound to point out that, while American agriculture is more mechanized than its Soviet counterpart (actually, Zimbabwean agriculture is more mechanized than its Soviet counterpart), we Californians are heavily reliant on migrant farm labor at harvest time. This only provoked more incredulity. "You mean that you came all the way to the Soviet Union so you could pick cabbages like a Mexican?" asked one. (Racial and ethnic tolerance isn't the Russians' strong suit.) Another said bitterly, "You see, we can't even gather our own harvest without having the Americans come over and do it!"

This desperate annual bid to salvage the harvest, complicated last fall by the rainiest September in recent memory, was indeed a resounding failure. The situation was equally chaotic at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU *kolkhoz* near the village of Kubinka, where I had picked livestock beets the previous week. The reasons most often adduced for this predicament are the primacy of military needs and utter peasant apathy.

At Kubinka, for example, numerous Su-27s performed aerobatic feats overhead, while people labored away in the fields below with not a single vehicle in sight. As at Polkhovsky, my companions were engineers and technicians at a Moscow military enterprise, whose skills will probably not be turned to civilian applications, like designing reapers, for years to come. My co-workers wouldn't tell me exactly what they did, but the fact that they worked in the defense sector was confirmed on the busride home from Polkhovsky, when one of the men offered cup after cup of *spirt*, a pure—and, thankfully, diluted—alcohol that one does not find in Moscow stores.

Indifference is, if anything, a tougher nut to crack. On both expeditions, we spent far more time getting to and from our destination than actually working. Was this because our *kompania* had imbibed too much at lunch to function in the afternoon? Was it because we had picked the fields clean? Perish the capitalist thought. No, we traveled for four hours and worked for two-and-a-half because the plan called for a given output, and, once we had filled our quota, no one had the slightest inclination to lift a finger. At Kubinka, we each picked two 500-meter rows; never mind that there were enough beets for us to have picked twice or three times as many. At Polkhovsky, the plan called for us to fill two trucks with cabbages; once we did, the day was over. Initiative? Extra work? Unload the trucks and come back for more? Try suggesting that to a *sovkhoznik*.

It would be almost as foolish as asking whether a *sovkhoz*-millionaire really is a seven-figure concern. After racking my brains for something favorable to say, the best I could come up with was that the apartment buildings at Kubinka were marginally less ugly than Moscow's. The only store was temporarily closed "for technical reasons" (the only food it had was bread); the "milk shop" was an old wooden shed not nearly as nice as some American doghouses I have seen, where milk was ladled out of a battered tin barrel into containers that stooped, kerchiefed women had brought from home; the party headquarters was a crumbling, bare building; and, aside from one teenager and the two middle-aged men I'd been working with, Polkhovsky appeared to be an all-female settlement. I would certainly hate to see what a non-millionaire *sovkhoz* looks like.

—Sally Newman

(Miss Newman, a doctoral candidate in Soviet Studies at UCLA, is an exchange scholar living in Moscow.)

Many Soviet draftees, particularly non-Russians, have been active in patriotic demonstrations, general strikes, and informal youth organizations. This politicization has created growing conflicts with ethnic Russian recruits, leading to mistreatment and even murder of soldiers from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Central Asia. According to Georgetown University's Murray Feshbach, of 3,900 non-combat related deaths last year, nearly 3,000 have been linked to ethnicity-related hazing, bullying, and male rape.

A radical officers' group, the Shield, openly backs radical critics of Mikhail Gorbachev. And one Russian parliamentarian close to Boris Yeltsin told me that more and more Russian officers and sergeants now support the Russian and not the Soviet government. "Pretty soon, it will be Yeltsin who has control of the finger on the trigger." On July 30, the increasingly radical Ukrainian parliament voted for an immediate recall of all Ukrainian citizens serving outside their region—the first step toward the fulfillment of the republic's pledge to take control of its military and security apparatus as a non-aligned state. Armenia is moving to constitute its own defense forces and neighboring Azerbaijan appears poised to follow.

Gorbachev must expend more and more political capital to hold the country and party-state structures together. He is trying his best to convey an image of control over a process that appears to have run away from him. Over the last two years, Gorbachev has blustered, bullied, and blackmailed democratic movements pressing for national sovereignty. Now he purports to be leading a calm renegotiation of a new "treaty of the Union." When the idea of a new treaty was first floated, Gorbachev probably envisioned a problem-free process in which the pliant satraps of the empire would try to sell a new formula for a unitary state to the peoples of the USSR.

His stratagem might have succeeded in the short term had it not been repudiated by the Russian republic. With the election of Boris Yeltsin to the chairmanship of the Russian republic's parliament, the cause of sovereignty for the republics gained a powerful advocate.

The effort to fashion a union treaty centers on a series of consultations among the elected leaders of the USSR's constituent republics. But the three Baltic republics are boycotting the talks. Working groups from the Russian republic, Moldova (as Moldavia has newly named itself), and the Ukraine have presented ideas radically at odds with Gorbachev's. And Armenia's and Georgia's recently elected leaders say they want no part of any new USSR. The consultation intended to bring order to the nationalist ferment is instead fueling disintegration and has led to a spate of sovereignty declarations in the republic parliaments, which many view as staking out bargaining positions. In many republics, hundreds of thousands have again taken to the streets to pressure local parliaments. It now appears virtually certain that any Gorbachev-styled union treaty based on a strong central state apparatus will be rejected by the majority of the republics.

"Gorbachev is now perhaps the President only of Central Asia," says Oleg Rumyantsev, the right-hand man of Yeltsin who wrote the draft of the Russian republic's new constitution. Others feel that Gorbachev's diminished role may soon resemble that of the European Community's Jacques Delors or the United Nations' Miguel Pérez de Cuellar. Mykhaylo Horyn, who heads the Ukrainian *Rukh*, jokes: "Gorbachev will soon be president of the Kremlin, i.e., he'll preside over a territory of several hundred acres."

While much has recently been written of the radical "500 Days" economic reform plan drafted by Stanislav Shatalin, what has gone virtually unnoticed is its radical restructuring of the USSR into a decentralized community of sovereign nations. As reported by *Izvestiya* on September 5, the Shatalin plan envisioned that "the level of basic taxes and the forms and methods of privatization will be determined at the republic level, and the prices of most goods will be regulated at the same level. Each republic will elaborate its own system of social guarantees and will autonomously form republic budgets." The central, all-union authorities "will receive funds to finance only programs in which the people are really interested."

Shatalin's plan would have transformed the USSR into an "economic union" modeled on the European Community, in which membership is voluntary "and the right to freely withdraw" is protected. The role of the center is restricted to a few prerogatives delegated by the "sovereign republics" and includes acting as a clearinghouse to "ensure the greatest possible agreement in the implementation of reforms." It is no wonder that Gorbachev has resisted these formulations, which cut to the heart of his power.

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Among Western policy-makers, the separatist movements have caused concern that the USSR could become Balkanized and highly unstable. But it is not the aims of these groups that are destabilizing; rather, it is the structure of the current empire that is untenable. Indeed, it is the forces of patriotism that are creating the preconditions for the emergence of democratic politics in the USSR. The moderate leaders of these movements are steering the locus of conflict toward electoral and parliamentary politics, while not shying away from the more confrontational politics of strikes and demonstrations to push aside the moribund structure of the party *apparat*.

They are also seeking to develop cooperative strategies and to negotiate disputes among themselves. One such cooperative grouping is the Baltic Council, created by the new democratic governments of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. In May 1990, representatives of the Ukrainian *Rukh*, the popular fronts of Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Georgia, and Latvia, Lithuania's *Sajudis*, Uzbekistan's *Birlik*, and Russian democrats met in Kiev to form the Union of Democratic Forces, which would act as a kind of information-consultation committee to help promote the decolonization of the Soviet Union. On August 29, the representatives of Yeltsin's Democratic Russia bloc and the Ukraine's National Council (the democratic parliamentary minority) signed an agreement that commits the two movements to the creation of "democratic independent states" in their republics and promises the quick "establishment of diplomatic and consular relations" between the Ukraine and Russia. By November, Russia and the Ukraine had signed a treaty incorporating these very principles. Similar treaties have been signed between the Ukraine and Lithuania, Lithuania and Russia, and Russia and Kazakhstan.

The fear of impending violence or inter-ethnic war is extremist, a convenient caricature of a more complex social and political reality. Much ethnic violence is in fact a product of acute poverty. In Baku, a city that for over a century had seen various ethnic communities living in relative harmony, violence in January 1990 was fueled by economic misery, symbolized by a vast shanty town (Khutor) of 200,000 on the outskirts of the city. It had been the breeding ground for the dehumanized perpetrators of violent pogroms against Armenians and Russians of Baku. Order was quickly restored, largely through the action of the local Popular Front. But the Soviet authorities, fearing the transfer of power to the democratic forces, moved in and violently crushed resistance.

In Novy Uzen, Kazakhstan, where riots broke out in the summer of 1989, schools are overcrowded by 50 percent, nearly 10 percent of the population of 56,000 is on waiting lists for housing, 4.3 percent of the population has tuberculosis, ordinary citizens do not have telephone service, and meat and potatoes are rationed.

In the Soviet south, where the Islamic Turkic peoples predominate, rates of poverty and unemployment are appalling. According to *Izvestiya*, the poverty rate stood at 37 percent in Tadzikistan, 45 percent in Uzbekistan, and 59 percent in Turkmenistan. Gorbachev now confronts alarming rates of unemployment: 28 percent in Azerbaijan, 36 percent in Tadzikistan, 23 percent in Uzbekistan, and 19 percent in Turkmenistan, 19 percent in earthquake-ravaged Armenia, and 16 percent in Kirghizia. Infant mortality rates stand at Third World levels, in some regions reaching 100 per 1,000 births. It is no wonder that such conditions bring about ethnic violence.

Indeed, to equate the violence that has erupted in the Soviet south with that of emerging democratic nationalisms would be like blaming ghetto riots in the U.S. in the 1960s on Martin Luther King, Jr. Indeed, despite the violent disruptions it has wrought, ethnic violence has been largely a peripheral phenomenon.

As the Soviet Union plunges headlong into a new political arrangement, the United States is a passive and fearful bystander. The silence, which began with the shameful repudiation of Lithuania's reassertion of national independence, has been deafening. A more responsible realpolitik is emerging in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland and Czechoslovakia, where independent parties, trade unions, and democratic groups are reaching out to counterparts in the disintegrating Soviet empire. Solidarity has sent organizing and printing experts to the Soviet Union to pass on skills to Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Lithuanian independence groups. Lech Walesa's political supporters also have welcomed Ukrainian and Baltic declarations of independence or sovereignty, echoing their leader's personal view that the Soviet Union will not survive for more than two years. In early September, Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski characterized Poland's new policy as one that recognizes it will now have "many neighbors on its Eastern borders" in place of a single Soviet Union.

The first step in assisting emerging democratic movements is to establish contact. For five years, the U.S. government and its European counterparts have placed their money on President

RUKH RIDERS

Today, in the Ukraine, the Soviet Union's second most populous republic (one in six Soviet citizens lives here), forces for independence and democracy command majority support. While the Ukrainian Communist party is suffering mass defections from its membership of three million, *Rukh*—the democratic pro-independence Ukrainian Popular Movement—has grown from a handful of writers in 1989 to an organization with 700,000 paid-up members and five million adherents.

In March 1990, despite censorship and Communist efforts to prevent opposition candidates from registering in a majority of districts, pro-independence democrats won two-thirds of the 180 races in which they fielded candidates. Party hardliners won 239 seats, while reformist Communists linked to a program called the Democratic Platform won about ninety.

Even the Communist parliamentary majority has felt the tangible shift in public opinion. In an effort to keep pace with expectations of sovereignty, it has announced that Ukrainian citizens should perform military service on the republic's territory, and vowed that any treaty linking the republic to the Soviet Union will be put to a referendum before the Ukrainian citizenry. On October 1, a pro-independence general strike was openly supported by 10 percent of the Ukraine's workers and brought as many as half a million demonstrators to the doors of the Ukrainian parliament in Kiev. A 17-day hunger strike by Ukrainian students ended in mid-October with the resignation of Ukrainian Prime Minister Vitaly Masol.

While the *Rukh* inspires such citizen activism, the more formal political life of the Ukraine is firmly in the hands of democratic deputies in Lvov, Kiev, the mining center of Donetsk, and other municipalities. It is at this level that beachheads are being won for an independent press and local radio and television. Privatization is being tried. In Lvov, 50-year-old grandmother Iryna Kalynets—a political prisoner for nine years in the 1970s—is leading a broad-based effort to rid the educational system of all traces of Communist cant.

The landmark shift in Ukrainian public opinion is linked directly to the televising of parliament. Particularly effective have been the interventions of the leaders of the *Narodna Rada* (People's Council). At the center of the *Rada* is a group of leaders who, like Kalynets, are former political prisoners. These *zek*s include several towering moral and political figures likely to lead a future Ukrainian democratic state.

One such is 63-year-old Levko Lukyanenko. A schoolmate of Mikhail Gorbachev at Moscow University's law school, Lukyanenko spent twenty-six years in jail between 1961 and 1988 for favoring Ukrainian independence. Now he has emerged as the leader of the radical Ukrainian Republican party, which has made impressive inroads among workers. Another charismatic figure is Vyacheslav Chornovil, 53, governor of the Lvov region and a three-time political prisoner. He is a proponent of a federal structure for the future Ukrainian state, in which education and cultural policy would be under the jurisdiction of the territories. This would allow predominantly Russian areas such as Odessa and the Crimea to safeguard their local traditions within a pluralistic and independent Ukraine.

On November 17, the fiery deputy Stepan Khmara, elected by workers of the radical mining town of Chervonohrad, near the Polish border, was jailed. Khmara, who spent most of the 1980s in prison or in exile, was arrested for assaulting a "man" in plain clothes. According to Democratic activists, Khmara was entrapped by a woman pleading for help in fending off a man who had accosted her. The woman has since disappeared, the man in plain clothes turned out to be a KGB colonel with a record of brutality against peaceful demonstrators, and the alleged "assault" by the deputy was coincidentally captured on videotape and broadcast on Ukrainian television.

If the KGB expected the Khmara "affair" to intimidate the opposition, it has had the opposite effect. In December, a series of pro-Khmara strikes broke out in Kiev and the western Ukraine. As the old order rapidly collapses, it is fitting that the most popular and credible voices for democratic change are coming from the ranks of former Gulag prisoners. The symbolism is not lost on the Communist authorities, who will not be above any means to discredit this new leadership.

—*A.K.*

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GORBY'S PUGO STICK

by Juris Kaza

The appointment of Boris Pugo, chief of the KGB in Latvia in the early 1980s, as the Soviet Union's minister of interior is, as Latvians say, a *majiens ar mietu*—a gesture with a big stick. Some fear it points to a crackdown on the Baltic and on democratic movements in the Soviet Union. Pugo is a Russian-born ethnic Latvian. According to Eduard Berklavs, formerly a high official in the Latvian Communist party, "The Soviets have always done their dirty work with non-Russians. It is certainly better to commit atrocities with a Latvian." Some of the architects of the Gulag were Latvians swept along with the Russian Revolution and carried to their deaths in the purges of 1937, the year of Pugo's birth. Pugo's father, Karlis, was one of the few survivors of a time when survival resulted, as one analyst puts it, "only from chance or treachery."

"His basic profession is that of a Chekist," says Berklavs, who in 1959 was thrown out of a "national Communist" Latvian government by Moscow. "Nothing good can be expected of the Cheka." The purge of Berklavs and many of his fellow "nationalists" was supervised by Arvids Pelse, who was a second father to Boris Pugo after Karlis Pugo died in the 1950s. Pelse, an ardent Russifier and orthodox Marxist who banned Latvia's traditional midsummer revelry on the grounds it was "pagan," earned the nickname *Dzeltena Nave*, "The Yellow Death."

For Berklavs, who has repudiated Communism and is now a leader of the Latvian National Independence Movement, Pugo's appointment is a signal that a strike against the Baltic independence struggles is imminent. "I personally believe that direct presidential rule will be imposed. The question is whether it will be done with or without a semblance of democracy. I think it will be with a semblance of democracy. They will let us keep the Supreme Council [Latvia's parliament], but there will be a governor who can veto anything."

Pugo's reign with the KGB is still fresh in the minds of his victims, among them Janis Rozkalns, a religious and political activist imprisoned from 1983 to 1987. At least six other activists were tried and sentenced in 1983, one of the worst years of repression in Latvia since the death of Stalin. After working behind the scenes of Latvia's first mass demonstrations in the summer of 1987, Rozkalns, finding his family threatened, emigrated to Germany in the fall.

Although he was formally convicted of "spreading religious ideas" and leading the National Independence Movement, Rozkalns believes that his real crime was helping uncover a major scam in Riga's fruit and vegetable markets protected by Pugo and the KGB. He was witnessing an earlier stage of the incredible corruption of the food distribution system that is blamed by some for present-day near-famine food shortages.

In the early 1980s, Rozkalns helped Peteris Tomsons, a fellow worker in the Riga Electrical Grid and a Communist party member assigned to an anti-corruption auditing unit, to disseminate information abroad about a widespread skimming operation that was netting tens of thousands of rubles daily for its bosses. As city electricians, Tomsons and Rozkalns had "perfect papers," which allowed them to enter almost any premises in Riga containing major electrical equipment. They discovered that the packing documents accompanying the then-plentiful shipments of fruit and vegetables to Riga had been consistently forged. Shipments would be "upgraded" one or two notches on the quality and price scale and sold, but then accounted for according to their real papers, with the gang skimming the excess.

The Latvian Communist party and KGB redoubled their efforts to suppress the matter when it became obvious that it had leaked to the Western press and human-rights organizations. "Pugo personally signed my arrest order," Rozkalns recalls. "And I was questioned extensively about Tomsons, my contacts with the vegetable warehouses, and so on. This was never brought up at my trial, but the KGB investigators shouted at me that for this, in other times, I would have been put against a wall and shot. . . . My guess is that we went up against a gang of pure, unadulterated thieves protected by Pugo."

The new official Latvian newspaper *Diena* ("The Day") recently mentioned that Pugo, in his most recent job as head of the Communist party control commission, was given the task of "justifying" the termination of a major corruption investigation launched by Armenian prosecutor Telman Gdlyan. Gdlyan's investigation, which started in Uzbekistan, was uncovering more and more leads to the Politburo.

As first secretary of the Latvian Communist party between 1984 and 1988, Pugo purged over a hundred party officials, some for alleged corruption and others for bureaucratic redundancy. Yet Eriks Hanbergs, a writer and editor at *Neatkariga Cina* ("The Independent Struggle"), a newspaper formed after the split of the Latvian Communist party last year, prefers to see Pugo as a pragmatist. "To the extent we had any contact, I saw him as a contradictory personality," he says. "He was trying, on one hand, to preserve the existing regime, but he understood that forces for change were ripening, and these could not be stopped with a club, but had to be understood. . . . As First Secretary, he intuitively tried to break the mold. It was unbelievable when he came to us at the Press House and it went so far that we could sit down at a roundtable discussion with him. He was also unconventional in driving his own car, being seen in the public places, at ordinary shops and the like."

The journalist also credits Pugo with tolerating the venting of radical views at a June 1988 plenum of Latvia's "creative associations"—writers, actors, artists, architects, filmmakers, and the like—at which political commentator Mavriks Vulfsons made the then-outrageous remark that Latvia could be considered an occupied country. In the summer of 1988, Pugo was heard speaking accented but passable Latvian on television.

"I see the positive direction in him, rather than what his present position may mean," Hanbergs says. But "there could be trouble. [Newly appointed Deputy Interior Minister Boris] Gromov gives me the shivers. I hope Pugo acts as a restraining influence on him."

"Pugo did not pay lip service to Gorbachev's policies, but actually seems to have tried to implement them," Radio Free Europe analyst Dzintra Bungs wrote in a recent profile, but she describes Pugo's actions against dissidents under Yuri Andropov's regime as "merciless."

Janis Trapans, another RFE analyst and former head of the Latvian Service, adds somberly: "When he had to destroy the relatively small opposition, he did it in a week. And he followed orders. Eichmann, too, didn't do anything on his own."

"Pugo is a KGB man," said a spokesman for the Latvian Popular Front (LPF), a large pro-independence movement which holds the majority in Latvia's parliament. "He replaced [former USSR Interior Minister Vadim] Bakatin because Bakatin was too liberal. The screws are going to be tightened, and we even believe that the central governing board of the LPF may cease to function. We've instructed our local chapters to try and work autonomously then, to organize disobedience and resistance. Gromov is a man with lots of experience in making war against civilians."

A few days later, Soviet soldiers and uniformed and plain-clothes police started an unsuccessful round-up of "draft evaders"—Latvian and Lithuanian youths doing alternative service under local law. In Latvia, some 4,500 alternative servicemen and 270 deserters went into hiding after warnings were broadcast on local radio and television. This number represents more than half the originally intended 1990 call-up, but Anita Stankevica, a spokesman for the anti-draft Latvian Women's League, said the draft boards in Latvia had cut their official quotas to make the low turnout seem less of a disaster.

The media were tipped off after army officials visited the personnel offices of companies employing "draft-dodgers," such as Riga's public transportation authority and the large Gailezers Hospital.

The raids are the first signal that Pugo, hand in hand with army leadership, is cracking down. Latvia's democratic movements are ready—they have repeatedly stated that all efforts to impose presidential rule or martial law will be forcefully resisted. Back-up leaderships, underground alternatives, and foreign representatives have been selected for the Baltic governments and popular movements in the event that Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are cut off from the outside world.

Pugo's record is that of a bad cop; the Balts and democratic movements elsewhere in the Soviet Union have no choice but to prepare for the worst. □

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Gorbachev, but in the USSR today he is increasingly viewed as a man whom history's parade has passed by. Many of the patriotic, pro-independence movements will have to confront enormous challenges if they are to sort out the shaping of a renewed statehood. There will be economies to rebuild, constitutions to write, electoral campaigns to wage, trade unions to organize, environments to protect, independent newspapers to create.

Economic assistance to the central state structures is almost certain to be squandered. As *Rukh* leader Horyn points out, "In the context of ongoing changes, the continued existence of the all-union center is questionable. Economic agreements signed in the USSR may not be worth the paper they are written on. Yet whether the USSR exists or disintegrates, the republics will exist and the agreements entered into with them will have a force of law and ensure continuity."

In recent weeks, the Soviet press has been filled with urgent calls for the imposition of an iron hand. The military has been in the forefront of this pressure for a restoration of order and discipline. In a somber television address on November 27, Marshal Dmitri Yazov, the defense minister, assured the Soviet public that the army can be counted on to preserve the union and warned that the army will shoot anyone who attacks the military. Yazov was lashing out at straw men: there are no mass-based nationalist movements seeking to take over Soviet military installations by force. Indeed, the forces of democratic nationalism are committed to peaceful protest and parliamentary means.

Gorbachev has joined this chorus of intimidation, arguing ad nauseam that the collapse of the central authority is contributing to mounting disorder and economic chaos. Of course, it is the center's attempts to annul or disrupt the new emerging relationships between the republics that is contributing to chaos. From the point of view of the center there is chaos, agrees the radical democratic activist Nina Belayeva, but from the point of view of the emerging democratic centers new relations are being shaped and a consolidation is occurring.

It is an open question whether the recent rhetorical hard line is evidence of Gorbachev's readiness to use force to defeat democratic separatists. Rhetorical bluster has been a regular feature of attempts to inhibit independence-minded groups and republic parliaments. Last August, Gorbachev threatened to use military force to crush pro-independence forces only to back down when the deadline came. And just a week after Marshal Yazov's tough TV talk, he declared that no Red Army serviceman would be compelled to serve in ethnic trouble spots.

Still, the power that President Gorbachev wields is immense. Even without resort to the military, the Soviet President has a combined force of nearly 1.5 million KGB and Interior Ministry troops. As part of the tougher Kremlin line, in several republics, Communist legislatures passed laws restricting the right to demonstrate and leading opposition figures have been arrested in the Ukraine and Central Asia.

Something has to give. Either the Soviet Union will revert to mass repression or its republics will move boldly to full independence or sovereignty, perhaps by fashioning a poor man's version of the European Community. According to Rumyantsev, a confederation of nations is likely to dispense with a unitary state. Horyn notes that to participate in a commonwealth is to join with Russia. "The absence of a deep democratic Russian tradition gives us pause about linking our nation's fortunes with Russia," he says.

Horyn, whose mass movement commands majority support in the 52-million-strong second Soviet Republic, and Kazimieras Uoka, who heads Lithuania's privatization program, believe that if within the next several months the process of change proceeds without a martial law crackdown, then the independence of the republics will be assured. This is why they question the Bush Administration's tilt toward President Gorbachev.

In the final analysis, about the only thing that seems certain is that there will not be and cannot be what the Bush Administration seems to want—a democratic Soviet Union. A transition to full democracy will mean that many of the USSR's constituent republics will likely split off. And those that choose to remain are likely to join what is in essence a loose confederation based on economic treaties and mutual defense pacts. The Soviet Union can survive only through a crackdown and mass repression—as an empire maintained at the barrel of a gun.

Yet, even at a time of tough talk by Gorbachev, a strong argument can be made that the prospect of a mass crackdown is now unlikely. With the collapse of Marxist-Leninist ideology, what set of beliefs would prompt such an action? It is precisely such reasoning that must have provoked Eduard Shevardnadze's dramatic resignation as foreign minister and his stirring call for democrats to rally against the imposition of dictatorship. If someone like Shevardnadze is bailing out, the independence movements can only gain greater confidence in their belief that the center will not hold. □

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THE INDISPENSABLE ENTREPRENEUR

by Theodore J. Forstmann

Lease a man a garden
and in time he will leave you
a patch of sand.
Make a man full owner
of a patch of sand
and in time he will grow there
a garden on the land.

Even the ancients understood the different results achieved through leasing from an all-powerful state and working with full rights to property and profit, and most of the Western world now sees the benefits of free markets and free societies. Virtually the entire spectrum of democratic politicians and economists have, in varying degree, seen capitalism as the centerpiece of Western democracy, yet most have been not only uninterested in the entrepreneurial dimension of capitalism, but actually ignorant of it.

Even Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, misunderstood the entrepreneur's role:

> In spite of [rich men's] natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they proposed from the labours of all the thousands they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires . . . they are led by an invisible hand . . . and without extending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of society.

If Adam Smith himself could not see the entrepreneur clearly, think of how enterprise has suffered at the all too visible hands of his liberal successors this century, those who call such work and sacrifice an expression of greed, such dreams nostalgia, such profits unearned, such rewards pure luck. As Churchill said, "Some see private enterprise as a predatory target to be shot, others as a cow to be milked, but few see it as a sturdy horse pulling the wagon."

The economist Joseph Schumpeter, writing in the 1930s, correctly spoke of capitalism as "a process of creative destruction." He realized that, while conventional wisdom holds that capitalism can best be understood by how it administers existing structures, the truly relevant issue is how it creates and destroys them:

> In capitalist reality, as distinguished from its textbook picture, it is not static competition which counts, but the competition from the new commodity, the new technology, the new source of supply or the new type of organization.

One could even say that free-market capitalism is fundamentally *dependent* on the entrepreneur. Such characteristics of capitalism as interest, credit, profit, and business cycles arise from innovation, making the entrepreneur the central figure in distinguishing capitalism from other systems. George Gilder remarks:

> The typical entrepreneur is not a respondent to existing demand, but an innovator who evokes demand; he is not an optimizer of resources, but an inventor of them; he is not a user of technology, but a producer of it. For small changes entrepreneurs are unnecessary. For these, a lawyer or a bureaucrat will do nicely.

Those of us who have dreamed or created, who have started a new business or managed one through change, can appreciate large-scale changes. We know that most new products, and indeed new industries, are created by individuals and small businesses. The best that large companies can do is make more and better copies of a good thing that already exists. We know empirically that most new jobs come into existence not in large enterprises but in small, growing ones.

Failure is the constant companion of the entrepreneur. He inhabits a world where belief precedes results, and where the best possibilities are almost surely invisible to others. Such a world is dominated by denial, rejection, difficulty, and doubt. Yet, to deny failure is to deny knowledge. Failure is the entrepreneur's strength as well as his sadness. To quote Churchill once more, "Success is often nothing more than moving from one failure to the next with undiminished enthusiasm."

This, of necessity, makes the entrepreneur a belligerent person. But, contrary to preconception, his is an internal belligerence: his zeal to prove himself superior comes from a desire to attain not merely the results of success but success itself. The entrepreneur, as a creator of the new and a destroyer of the old, is constantly in conflict with convention. And although innovators are, when successful, unceasingly imitated, they are always outsiders to the "establishment." Such people are always found disturbing, even irritating. Indeed, they are completely unemployable. I was such a person, and that embarrassing fact led me twelve years ago to found Forstmann Little, which has now grown to a multi-billion-dollar industry.

If we appreciate the difficulties with which such unique and misunderstood people have to cope, yet recognize their indispensability to the capitalist system, we should take heed of which conditions cause them to flourish and which to flounder. Economic policies must not hinder entrepreneurs from launching companies based on new concepts and technologies. Since there can be no capitalism without capitalists, governments must cease shifting taxes and interest burdens from large enterprises to individuals. Incentives are necessary to allow individuals to risk energy and capital on new investments, and innovation must be encouraged by all means possible. Jude Wanniski, economist and author of *The Way the World Works*, has compared the capitalist economy to a tree:

> A tree has a vast underground root system in order to collect nutrients and moisture and provide it foundation. If there is no moisture or nutrients to collect, the tree dies. . . . The leaves and blossoms that crown the tree are small in number compared to myriad fingers of the root system. Think of this crown as mature corporate America. Think of the root system as entrepreneurial America. . . . If it is overtaxed, it dies.

Examples abound of how government policy can increase or decrease entrepreneurial activity. In the United States, the significant lowering of the capital-gains tax rate by the Steiger Amendment in the late 1970s created massive investment in technological ventures, securing America's continuing lead in computer and microprocessing industries. The lowering of marginal individual tax rates throughout the 1980s allowed the person of enterprise to keep a significantly higher proportion of the fruits of his labor, and created tens of millions of new jobs and the longest uninterrupted expansion in this country's history. Conversely, high individual income tax rates in both the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1970s stifled individual initiative. At that time, many of the most productive citizens of both countries fled abroad, proving the adage that highly progressive tax rates do not redistribute incomes—they redistribute taxpayers.

Societal values, too, can stifle entrepreneurial spirit. In the financial sector of the United States in the 1980s, a culture of cynicism grew, as unbridled ego and greed created a generation adept only at inventing and shuffling basically bogus securities, and equally inept at envisioning or participating in anything real or lasting. Although their

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Theodore J. Forstmann is senior partner of Forstmann Little & Co. This article is adapted from a speech delivered at the Venturer of the Year Awards in London last fall.

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rhetoric was seductively entrepreneurial, these people were fundamentally anti-capitalist. Their focus was on the short rather than the long term, on consuming rather than producing, on taking rather than giving. We learned the hard way that a culture dominated by materialism actually suppresses the spirit of enterprise.

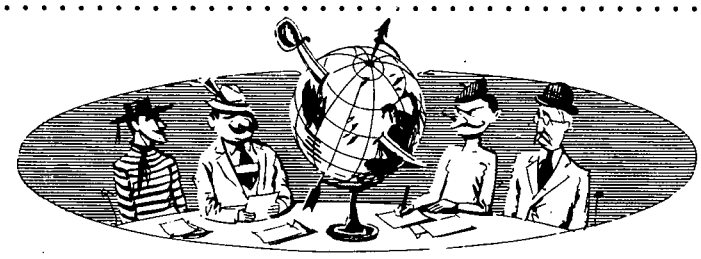
Our experiences at Forstmann Little have been typical of the entrepreneurial experience. In corporate America in the 1970s, management was well entrenched and shareholders virtually disenfranchised. There was no credit available for takeovers and very little for friendly mergers and acquisitions. The macroeconomic context included high marginal tax rates, permissive monetary policies, and ever-increasing federal regulation. The result, as we know, was "stagflation": high inflation and low real growth.

Forstmann Little's response to the calamity was thought revolutionary at the time. Our conception was based on a novel form of corporate evaluation and reorganization. First, we sought to acquire companies with a predictable cash flow, as evaluated by their applicability to the business and financial criteria we had developed. Secondly, we wanted to impose the "right capital structure," one which entailed using what looked like a lot more debt than had previously been thought viable. (It should be pointed out that the perception of increased leverage was largely illusory, as we employed our own subordinated debt at rates 50 percent or more under the market, but with real equity ownership attached.)

Thirdly, and of signal importance, we envisioned senior managers as full partners. It was our task to avoid risk by keeping appropriate businesses and selling those that were inappropriate; and by providing a capital structure that would decrease real risk and increase real reward. It was management's task to make the right operational decisions. All participants were to have a significant equity in the business, which they had bought and paid for. Our managers, and many like them elsewhere, thought more like owners, and were compensated as such. What we were after was unanimity of purpose, with all partners seeing risk and reward in precisely the same way.

Imitators appeared by the hundreds, of course; despite junk-bond-driven excesses over the last ten years, the macroeconomic climate for entrepreneurship was favorable. But mysteriously, societal values were not, and what had begun as a worthwhile entrepreneurial exercise became a free-for-all that disintegrated in its own excesses. □

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL



PLO, INC.

by Daniel Pipes

When Kuwait disappeared into the Iraqi maw last August 2, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) found itself bereft of its second largest source of funds. To make matters worse, Yasir Arafat's enthusiastic endorsement of Saddam Hussein's aggression caused the Saudi government, his largest donor, to cut off financial support. The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Egypt followed suit.

The alienation of so many contributors has serious consequences. In November, Arafat estimated the financial loss to his organization to be $10 billion. PLO income appears to be about half of what it was before August 2. PLO employees, armed and not, have already experienced pay cuts and more reductions lie ahead. Though the PLO is an organization that can be counted on to rebound from adversity, this blow will severely crimp its activities and its ambition to remain the dominant Palestinian organization.

PLO spending has been a matter of dispute for some time. *Forbes* and the *Wall Street Journal* estimate the 1986 budget at $154 and $156 million, respectively. The *Economist* put it at $250 million. Janet and John Wallach, authors of a recent biography of Arafat, opt for $300-400 million. James Adams, author of *The Financing of Terror* (1986), reckons it was $1.25 billion. Looking at the 1989 budget, Neil C. Livingstone and David Halevy, authors of *Inside the PLO*, estimate $675 million; the *Near East Report* has the highest figure of all, $2 billion.

The PLO did publish a budget in 1987, pegging it at $197 million. Two years later the figure had reached $274 million. However, like Soviet military budgets, these figures hide more than they reveal. Most important, they appear to exclude expenditures by Fatah and other constituent groups of the PLO. The Fatah Fund, the Chairman's Secret Fund, and other clandestine operations match the visible income. My estimate, based on the reports of spending patterns and income, is that PLO expenditures reach $500 million a year—about the same as the budget of an American city the size of Cincinnati.

Historically, money for this impressive budget has derived primarily from three sources: dividends and interest on investments; legal and illegal commercial activities; and contributions from governments. Fearing liens and other legal problems, the PLO breathes not a word about its assets. As Atallah Atallah, a renegade PLO intelligence chief, explains, Arafat uses "Mafia techniques [designed] not to leave a trace." Instead, he hides behind front names and pleads poverty.

To a degree, these techniques work: estimates of PLO holdings differ by several orders of magnitude. *Forbes* estimated the assets (excluding armaments) in 1986 at a mere $1 billion. Adams reckoned the figure at $5 billion. *Der Spiegel* said $6 billion. An Arab banker in the know puts it at $6.5 billion as of 1990. The *Economist* came in at around $9 billion for 1986. *October*, an Egyptian magazine, and the Swiss newspaper *Tages Anzeiger* (1988) count $14 billion. Others go beyond mere numbers and enter the realm of hyperbole. Walid Jumblat, the Druze militia leader, has declared that Arafat "has enough money to buy half of Lebanon, not to say all of it." I estimate that PLO investments total about $2-3 billion.

Some of this money is held in gold and real estate, but much of it is highly liquid. Investments have been made around the world, especially in the West. Several institutions hold PLO funds, including the Gulf Bank, the Central Bank of Algeria, and the National Bank of Kuwait. (Presumably assets in Kuwaiti banks are now history.) But the most important bank by far is the Arab Bank, with some 350 branches around the world, $1 billion in capital base and $13 billion in deposits. Owned in part by the PLO, the Arab Bank handles the organization's working accounts. Key investment decisions used to be made in Luxembourg, but have been moved to the bank's Zurich branch. The PLO has many connections to the Arab Bank; to mention just one, the bank's chairman, Abd al Majid

Daniel Pipes is director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. Two of his books, The Rushdie Affair *and* Greater Syria, *were published last spring.*

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Shoman, once directed PLO finances.

In the early 1980s, when assets were greater and expenditures fewer, the PLO virtually lived off of interest and dividends—but no longer. Assuming an annual return of about 7 percent, the income from PLO assets amounts to some $150-200 million a year. If the budget is $500 million a year, the PLO is experiencing a shortfall of some $300-350 million.

From 1970 to 1982, when the PLO ran a state within a state in Lebanon, its revenues derived mostly from a wide array of legal and illegal commercial activities. On the legal side, the PLO got involved in some interesting ventures, like the Modern Mechanical Establishment, an iron-and-steel company south of Sidon that paid no taxes, used coercive sales methods, and engaged in predatory pricing. Then, after forcing the competition to go out of business, it raised prices.

Lebanon's anarchy offered unbounded opportunities for illegal activities: drug trafficking, protection rackets, robberies, hijackings, and the training of foreign terrorists. While drug trafficking was by far the steadiest and most lucrative racket during the Lebanon years, other activities brought the most spectacular results. The December 1975 capture of OPEC oil ministers reportedly netted the PLO $20 million. A few months later, the PLO participated in what the *Guinness Book of World Records* calls the largest bank heist of all time; robbing the Beirut branch of the British Bank of the Middle East brought the PLO one-third of the loot, between $16 and $33 million.

The expulsion from Beirut in 1982 ended this financial golden era. The PLO has since re-established its operations in Lebanon; even today, James Adams comments, it remains "a major economic influence in the country—or what's left of it." But Lebanon's economy has fallen apart since 1982, so revenues from there are a fraction of what they were earlier. Also, while annual Soviet-bloc aid once amounted to the equivalent of tens of millions of dollars in cash, arms, training, and intelligence, Eastern Europe's liberation and the ravages of perestroika have dried up this source.

Deprived of these sources, the PLO has in recent years become heavily dependent on handouts from Arab presidents, kings, and emirs—a demeaning return to pre-1970 circumstances. Gone are the days when Arafat had the leeway to act independently of his state sponsors. The PLO has steadily received at least $100 million per year from the Arab states since 1973, but the annual amount has edged toward $300 million. Arab states agreed to take up the slack for both offensive reasons (to gain influence) and defensive ones (to avoid retribution).

Nearly all of this income came from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and other states that have just now cut the PLO off. According to PLO records made public in 1988, the Saudi authorities donated $855 million over the previous decade. In fact, the total contribution was much more, for the Saudis funneled massive amounts to Arafat personally. Abu Musa, a onetime ally of Arafat, indirectly confirmed this point in 1983: "Saudi Arabia gives him tens, hundreds of millions, to corrupt—not to develop—the revolution. It does not appear in the books. It is much more than the official contributions."

Not all the money came from government coffers. Palestinians living in Arab countries are supposed to pay 3 to 7.5 percent of their salaries as a tax to the PLO. While it is unclear when and where these funds were actually collected and transmitted, it appears that Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE were the only states to do so regularly; and they have stopped providing this service since August 2.

The PLO's operations and political prominence depend heavily on money, so the sudden disappearance of half the organization's budget is causing many problems. Money gives Yasir Arafat control over some 20,000 gunmen in both conventional and irregular forces. It permits diplomacy on a grand scale; the PLO has two more "embassies" than Israel and Arafat sometimes visits three or four capitals in his own plane on a single day.

Money permits him to influence states by moving around liquid assets. Some $700 million was moved out of Jordan in 1986 to protest King Hussein's policies; $200 million was once transferred into Tunisia as a reward. Funds are on occasion lent to allies in need, such as $12 million to the Nicaraguan government in 1981 and $100 million to Iraq in 1986. "Friendship" projects have included factories and farms in places like Syria, Guinea, the Maldives, and Poland. Arafat also has the means to do the odd favor. In 1985, he is said to have won the release of three Soviet hostages held in Beirut by paying $15 million to fundamentalist Muslims.

Money sways public opinion by allowing the PLO to subsidize the media. In February 1986, for example, a payment of $150,000 to the pro-Jordanian Jerusalem newspaper *Al-Quds* rapidly turned around that paper's editorial stance.

Money reduces the chances that a rival Palestinian organization will challenge Arafat's leadership. Half a year after the *intifada* erupted, the PLO offered $50 million to its leadership—a clear attempt to bring an unruly upstart under company control. Hamas, the fundamentalist Muslim group that has emerged as the PLO's only serious rival, hopes to tap the PLO's funds.

Money makes it possible to provision social, welfare, economic, cultural, and educational services which win Palestinian allegiance to the PLO. When traveling in poor countries, Arafat dispenses money freely. Not to be overlooked is the opulence that money makes possible. Notwithstanding the talk of Arafat's abstemious ways, he and other higher-ups live like pashas—elegant villas in Tunisia, first-class travel, and all other perquisites of power. Wadi Haddad, the PLO explosive expert killed in 1978, is said by his comrades-in-arms to have left his sister a bequest of $140 million. The Egyptian editor Anis Mansur holds that Palestinian leaders are "the richest people in Egypt"; Mustafa Tallas, the Syrian defense minister, calls Arafat "one of the world's ten richest men."

To maintain close control over PLO finances, Arafat personally makes deposits and signs large checks. While this highly centralized control leads to resentments and inefficiencies, it also makes Arafat indispensable. As one Jordanian official put it, "They have to keep Arafat because if he goes, no one will know where the money is."

Wealth has become so central to the PLO's presence and influence, it sometimes looms larger than military considerations. "Money is [Arafat's] only weapon at present," Abu Musa declared in 1983. Thus, when the PLO evacuated Beirut in 1982, James Adams explains, its leaders "feared the Israeli seizure of their assets more than they did a military defeat." (Not without reason; that exodus did cost them some $400 million.) Heavy dependence on large amounts of money has taken its toll; as a Jordanian official once put it, "The PLO isn't a revolution. It's a corporation."

Every attempt until now to count out the PLO has proven wrong; no one can predict its demise with confidence. But the current situation, described by *Foreign Report* as a "financial catastrophe," is likely to translate into a severe decline in the popularity of Yasir Arafat and the authority of the PLO.

Some may find this development unfortunate because it obstructs resolution of Palestinian-Israeli issues. But that grants the PLO too much. It is actually today's representative of that radical Palestinian tradition that, as Abba Eban put it, has never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. Far from serving as a force for peace, the PLO has bludgeoned and suppressed more moderate elements willing to coexist with Israel. For this reason, its financial predicament offers not just the likelihood of less violence in the Middle East but also a rare opportunity for alternative Palestinian voices to make themselves heard. □

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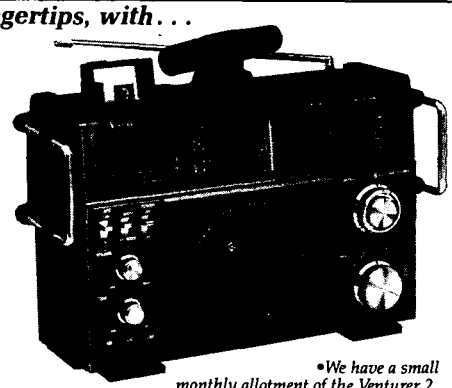

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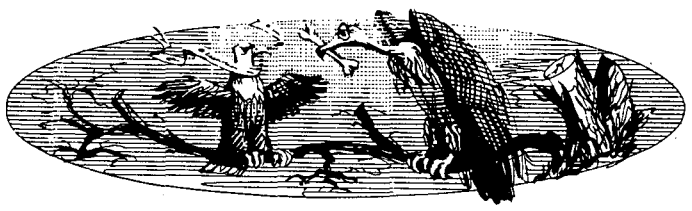

RIEGLE BEAGLES

by Terence P. Jeffrey

I don't think there's any question that his testimony to date will cause his indictment.
—Senator Howell Heflin of the Iran-contra committee, on Gen. Richard V. Secord, May 7, 1987.

*

President Reagan did not solicit money for the Nicaraguan contras from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.
—Reagan spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, May 12, 1987. On May 13, 1987, Reagan revealed that his diary indicated that the Saudi monarch had initiated the subject of aid to the contras in a White House meeting and that "the king, before he left, told me he was doing that, and that he was going to increase aid."

*

There's no question in my mind that there was a solicitation.
—Senator Warren Rudman, vice chairman of the Iran-contra committee, speaking to reporters on May 14, 1987.

On the morning of November 15, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics began public hearings to ask not only what five senators—John McCain, John Glenn, Dennis DeConcini, Donald Riegle, and Alan Cranston—had done for Charlie Keating, but also what the former owner of bankrupt Lincoln Savings and Loan had done for them. But any fear the hearings might disintegrate into an intramural Iran-contra-style inquisition was swiftly dissipated by the placid disposition of committee chairman Howell Heflin. Three years ago, Heflin and Keating Fiver DeConcini were the last Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee to awaken to the threat Bob Bork posed to America. Now Heflin was proving once again he was a man whose principles would not be sold short.

As the hearings progressed, Heflin's judicial reserve seemed to deepen. Someone unfamiliar with his posture and demeanor, entering the hearing room at, say, quarter to five, might have honestly wondered whether the chairman was in fact sitting behind the dais, or had been wheeled there on a gurney. Sitting mutely, he displayed a depth of character that was almost horizontal.

Warren Rudman, the committee's Republican vice chairman, may have lacked Heflin's gravitas, but shared his innate sense of priorities. During a short recess on one of the first days of testimony, Rudman was ambushed by journalists as he rushed through the hall outside the hearing room. "I've already seen all the evidence," he shouted nonchalantly. It was unclear what question he was answering. But it begs the question of why they were having public hearings at all.

Before the hearings were an hour old, Heflin, Rudman, and Senator David Pryor of Arkansas had taken turns addressing the deficiencies of the press and the American people. The former for presumably harboring an insidious bias against liberal politicians; the latter for believing their lies. After that, there were no further displays of indignation from the committee.

"As we start these hearings," Heflin said, "many of our fellow citizens apparently believe that your services were bought by Charles Keating, that you were bribed, that you sold your office, that you traded your honor and your good names for contributions and benefits.

"Many of these same people also apparently believe that your action, and perhaps the actions of other senators and congressmen, were solely responsible for the savings and loan failures of scandalous proportion."

But the chairman could not bring himself to ascribe these doltish misperceptions to the American people without insinuating blame for their thoughts to the intervention of a malevolent outside force. "Not all of what has been reported is accurate," he said, "and some of it has been misleading. I hope that these hearings will provide useful and beneficial means of informing the public of the true facts."

"Fairness," he had said earlier, "demands that our judgment be withheld until all the evidence has been received."

Senator Rudman followed by declaring Heflin's speech excellent. But he could not resist amplifying the chairman's concerns about the deceptions of the press and gullibility of the American people. "Literally hundreds of stories have been written on the subject of the so-called Keating Five," he said, the color rising in his face. "The majority of these stories have been misleading, have taken facts out of context, and frankly are just plain wrong . . .

"So as we begin these hearings," urged the man who had "already seen all the evidence," "I hope that the American people dismiss any precon-

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Terence P. Jeffrey is an editorial writer for the Washington Times. *His article on Charles Keating, "The Man Who Bought Washington," appeared in the February 1990* American Spectator.

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ceived notions and prejudices and receive the evidence as we received the evidence, openly, with the impartiality that the American sense of fair play and justice requires."

But even this was not demonstrative enough for Senator Pryor, who had just taken a blow to the solar plexus from the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*. In 1986, former House Speaker Jim Wright had delayed an early thrift bailout bill in the House as a means of intimidating federal thrift regulators. Pryor, the *Journal* reported, had similarly delayed the bill in the Senate.

"Today, I think, marks the end of something," he said. "Today marks . . . the end of rumor, of innuendo, of misinformation, and leaks of a most sensitive nature that have been very, very detrimental not only to this system but specifically to some of our colleagues before us. . . .

"I strongly believe that any staff person on the ethics committee who has in any way been responsible for these leaks should be automatically terminated. . . . Any senator who has collaborated in any way with leaks that have gone to the press . . . should be expelled from the Senate. And . . . any member of the bar who has in any way collaborated to have these leaks circulated . . . should be disbarred and never able to practice law again." It was the sternest moral judgment any Democrat on the ethics committee is likely to pronounce.

But Pryor was pointing to the real outrage. Somebody inside the official Capitol Hill community had collaborated with the enemy—the rest of America. Now the lines were drawn. It was Us versus Them.

If the committee's objective was to get through the hearings without causing undue damage to the perpetual Congress, its greatest obstacle was not the press but its own special counsel Bob Bennett. The problem with Bennett was that, though a high-powered New York lawyer, he insisted on interpreting the activities of the Keating Five with a moral sensibility more familiar to Middle America than Capitol Hill.

Like Richard Phelan, who served as special counsel to the House ethics committee in its investigation of Jim Wright, Bennett prepared a case that was unapologetically thorough. But unlike the House committee, which came to the political conclusion that protecting Wright could backfire, and thus released the Phelan report unabridged, the Senate ethics committee did its best to bury Bennett's, and then carefully to moderate the conditions under which its factual meat was parceled out to the public.

In October, when it became obvious that the committee was delaying action on the report until after the fall elections, someone leaked to the press that Bennett had recommended dropping Glenn and McCain from the investigation. The committee ordered the General Accounting Office to investigate the leak. Heflin then complained publicly that the leaker had leaked for "partisan" reasons—an ironic way of casting suspicion on the reportedly exonerated McCain, the only Republican among the Keating Five.

On the very first day of the hearings, Heflin explained that there was no partisanship behind the committee's disinclination to release Bennett's report. Releasing it, he said, would have been unfair to the senators being investigated. And besides, Bennett himself had asked that it not be released, citing the committee's confidentiality rules. That seemed fair enough—for a few hours. But before the day was over, Bennett delivered a summary of his case that did in fact exonerate McCain and Glenn of unethical conduct. The committee, nonetheless, would still require the two to sit, perhaps for months, in the same dock with DeConcini, Riegle, and Cranston. "Neither good conscience nor fundamental consideration of due process," Heflin solemnly promised, "would allow the committee to permit the individuality of [the senators'] separate cases to be obscured by [their] mutual presence."

In the showdown between Us and Them, McCain and Glenn would be made to stand with the congressional "us," whether they embodied the old team spirit or not.

But the "appearance" problem for DeConcini, Riegle, and Cranston soon transcended the cast and staging of the ethics committee's political theater. Bennett opened his case by arguing that the evidence raised serious questions about the link between Keating's political contributions and the services these three senators had performed for him.

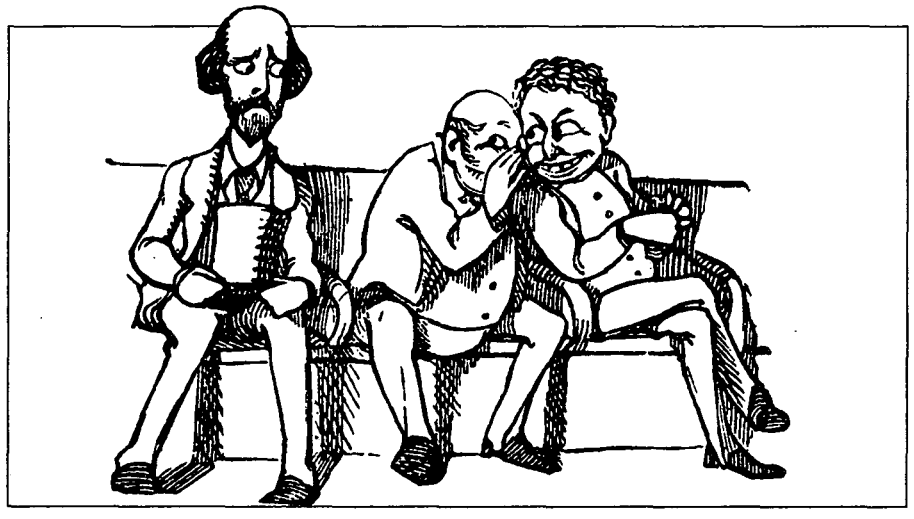
For example, in 1985 one of Keating's key political goals was to get Edwin Gray fired as chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board—the now defunct agency that regulated federally insured thrifts. In July 1985, according to Bennett, DeConcini "called Treasury Secretary James Baker and White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan to complain about Chairman Gray and to ask that he be removed." That same July, Keating, his employees, and his family contributed $20,000 to DeConcini's campaign.

Until early 1987, Senator Riegle and Charlie Keating were political polar opposites. But between January and April of that year, according to evidence laid out by Bennett, Keating raised more than $70,000 in campaign funds for Riegle and Riegle helped Keating by arranging a meeting between Ed Gray and Senators Glenn, McCain, DeConcini, and Cranston.

Three weeks into the hearings, the committee finally agreed to compel the testimony of Keating's chief lobbyist, James Grogan. In mid-December, speaking with a grant of limited immunity, Grogan swore under oath that in a March 1987 trip to Phoenix Riegle personally told Keating he would arrange the Gray meeting, while at the same time in a separate room he and Riegle staffer Kevin Gottlieb discussed their fundraising project. After April 1987, Riegle never again performed constituent services for Keating, and Keating never again raised money for Riegle.

Cranston's contacts with Keating were more sustained and intimate. In January 1987, Cranston's chief fundraiser, Joy Jacobsen, wrote him a memo reminding him that Keating was one of a number of people "who have been very helpful to you and who have cases or legislative matters pending . . . who will rightfully expect some kind of resolution." On March 3, 1987, Keating was helpful to Cranston again, cutting a $100,000 check to one of the senator's voter registration efforts. A month later, Cranston attended the meeting with Ed Gray that Riegle had arranged. But that was not the end of it. "There is substantial evidence," Bennett told the committee, "that Senator Cranston solicited or accepted large contributions from Mr. Keating on four occasions connected in time and circumstance to Mr. Keating's requests for his help with the bank board."

On the third occasion Cranston hit the contribution jackpot. In January 1988, according to Bennett, Keating, Grogan, and Cranston dined together in Los Angeles and Keating asked Cranston to make a call for him to Danny Wall, who had replaced Ed Gray as chairman of the FHLBB. Grogan subsequently called fundraiser Joy Jacobsen to discuss it. Jacobsen wrote a memo to Cranston reminding him to phone Wall and ask him to meet with Keating because "Charlie wants to know directly from Wall why the [FHLBB's] investigation of Lincoln is still going on." On January 20, Cranston made the call. Wall agreed to meet with Keating on January 28. On February 10, Cranston visited Keating in Phoenix. At that meeting Keating handed Cranston two checks worth $500,000 made out to the senator's voter registration organization.



Bennett's revelation of these facts evoked no shame from DeConcini, Riegle, or Cranston. Nor did it provoke the sort of snap judgments from Senators Heflin and Rudman that they used to make back in their Iran-contra days, when the political targets were Ronald Reagan and the presidency rather than three senators and Congress.

DeConcini did pump up his courage to make one confession. It concerned his feelings for the special counsel. "I dare say," he said in his opening statement, "I cannot stand here, gentlemen, and not protest in the strongest terms, that I resent that man Robert S. Bennett . . . tying this senator to bribery, to a crook. There's no evidence at all that occurred." Mother Teresa, he explained, was friendly with Keating too. All he did was fulfill his "obligations as a senator." (Bennett, by the way, had not accused DeConcini of bribery.)

Senator Riegle's dismay was more restrained. "I think I'm as independent as anybody here," he told the committee. " . . . The idea that I would [help Keating] for a campaign fundraiser is sheer nonsense. I have high standards. That's why I've been here for twenty-four years."

Cranston seconded that argument. Then he gave witness to his most deeply held beliefs. "I have made justice, fairness, and moral behavior the guiding stars of my life."

Maybe he was just sleepy, but up in his chairman's perch, Senator Heflin seemed to be nodding. □

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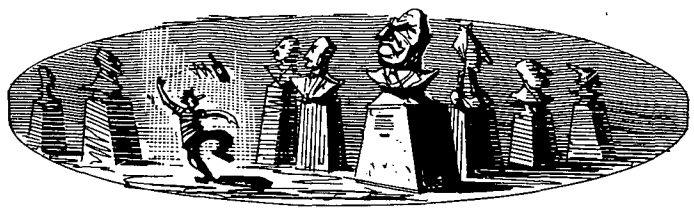

SOLIDARITY WITH SADDAM

by Cathy Young

Last September, when the middle-aged man outside the office of *Moscow News* who tried to sell yours truly a photocopied manual of "365 sexual positions" found out that he was speaking to an American, he immediately wanted to talk politics. "Listen," he said, "I think your President Bush was wrong to send troops to Saudi Arabia." As I braced myself for a philippic against U.S. imperialism, the man continued, "He should have just dropped a neutron bomb on that Hussein guy. Because it's no good for American soldiers to die over there."

While not many Russians go to such extremes, most of them share the gentleman's basic sympathies and antipathies. By and large, the coverage of the Gulf crisis in the Soviet press has been anti-Hussein and cautiously pro-American, with full reports of Iraqi atrocities in occupied Kuwait. Nonetheless, Hussein is receiving support from unexpected quarters in the Soviet Union: the anti-Semitic, ultra-nationalist Pamyat ("Memory") fringe. The independent weekly *Express-Chronicle* reports that, on October 13, a Pamyat group, led by one Alexei Yemelyanov (an eccentric author of "anti-Zionist" tracts who has spent several years in psychiatric hospitals, not for his views but for the axe murder of his wife) picketed the U.S. Embassy in Moscow with such slogans as "Long Live Arab Unity Against Zionism!" "Zionism Is the Plague of the 20th Century!" "People of Iraq! Russian Patriots Are With You!" and "Hands Off Iraq!" Many of the fifty or so protesters were holding portraits of Saddam Hussein.

Incidentally, the October 23 issue of *Express-Chronicle* reports that at the Iraqi consulate in Leningrad, anyone who picks up a portrait of Hussein gets a free pack of Camels. No word on how many Soviet citizens have taken up the offer; about a hundred hot-headed Muscovites, however, have expressed the desire to enlist in the Iraqi army and fight the Yankee imperialists. In Leningrad, says the paper's October 30 edition, about forty local *pamyatniki*[1] picketed the U.S. consulate on October 28, with such slogans as "Let's Have an Intifada on Russian Soil!" and "Saddam Hussein, We Are With You!" (Across the street, members of the radical Democratic Union held their own rally; one of the slogans said, "Together, the USSR and the USA Defeated Hitler; Together, We'll Defeat Hussein, the Butcher of Baghdad!")

These may be the shenanigans of a bunch of loonies; the same cannot be said of a November 5 report by the weekly *Golos Rodiny* ("Voice of the Motherland"), an official sheet turned out in Moscow by the Russia Society for the benefit of "compatriots abroad." An article describes an October meeting in Iraq between a Russia Society delegation and a number of Iraqi bigshots. The bombshell comes when the journalist sums up the Iraqi case as stated to the Soviet guests: "The campaign against Iraq began" after Hussein proposed, at last February's Arab summit, that "Arab investments, or 'petrodollars,' should be channeled into the economies of the USSR and Eastern Europe to help perestroika. Since the West still takes a wait-and-see attitude on this issue . . . one may conclude that the bold offer of the Iraqi president was not well received in certain Western capitals. It is then, the Iraqis claim, that conflict began to simmer. . . . Kuwait was used as a pawn in the oil price-cutting game, which led to the regrettable use of force and aggression." Now, *that* really clears the whole thing up.

Gallows Humor

It is well known that wit has always helped Russians weather tough times, and now it has even come out of the closet. The October issue of *Iskra* ("Spark"), which describes itself as "a *very* independent Russian newspaper and is devoted entirely to political satire, has this comment on the "500 Days" economic plan: "The Lethargon Deluxe cooperative offers its services to individuals and organizations who would like to hibernate for 501 days starting October 1, 1990. Protection from bedsores guaranteed. Payment upon waking, in hard currency only. In the event of martial law, the company bears no liability for disturbances of the client's sleep." But that's relatively harmless. The same issue includes a little story entitled "Retribution," which in the old days would have earned the author a lengthy sentence for advocating terrorism.

The sketch opens with the monologue of a person directing people in line: "Next! Ticket! Passport! Number! Name! What do you mean, this one is not good enough?" Then it becomes clear that this is no ordinary line for meat or soap: "Where am I going to get a Politburo member for every one of you? They're all taken. I'm giving you a good comrade." The people, it turns out, are waiting to participate in the hanging of Communist *apparatchiks*. The time? Presumably, soon after the final collapse of commie power.

> How many times am I supposed to tell you, this is not where they are going to hang Politburo members. Tickets? Only to those who regularly attended rallies. They're selling tickets at 50 rubles apiece down where the Lenin monument used to be. . . . Citizens, we've run out of Communist bosses. Tickets number three will be filled with KGB men and trade union officials. . . . Ah-hah, here they come. Is that by any chance Ivan Petrovich, the ex-first secretary of the ex-regional Party committee? Get him over here. He's about to receive personal services for the very last time. . . .

Just as the hanging is about to proceed, despite a shortage of boards for the gallows, "Ivan Petrovich woke up and remembered that he was sitting at a regional Committee meeting. . . . He went up to the microphone and announced that he was quitting the Communist party."

This is not to say that Communists are really at the end of their rope; indeed, with Gorbachev getting so friendly with the KGB and the generals, the likes of "Ivan Petrovich" may yet have the last laugh. However, in one interesting development, Ivan K. Polozkov, the hard-line chief of the Communist party of Russia, has been denied Moscow residence registration by the Moscow City Council. The CPR represents the "conservative" wing of the Communist establishment, and is widely hated and ridiculed. Comrade Polozkov himself has become something of a bogeyman for the democratically minded; a poll taken last August and published in September's *Democratic Russia* shows him to be Russia's most unpopular politician. On the other hand, he is a protégé of Gorby the Great Liberator, who was recently seen on Soviet TV yelling at Moscow mayor Gavriil Popov over the Polozkov imbroglio.

Comrade Polozkov need not worry about a long commute, since the Central Committee will probably give him an official residence, and he already has a country house just outside the city. *Izvestia* correspondent A. Illesh points out (November 6) that Polozkov is lucky people are no longer arrested for living in Moscow without a permit, a treatment once reserved for "such segments of our population as vagrants, prostitutes, and dissidents."

Useless Idiots

While the fate of Comrade Polozkov is hardly terrifying, little things like that are liable to be distressing if you have taken the trouble of fleeing the United States to live freely as a Communist. Soviet Presswatch has already noted the sad plight of Arnold Lockshin, the American traitor who told *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in January of last year how upset he was about the bourgeois revival in the Soviet Union. Well, having stood up to the FBI, he's not about to let Communism go down without a fight. On July 18, the Leningrad Journalists' Union newspaper *Chas Pik* ("Rush Hour") described Lockshin's

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Cathy Young is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

[1] *Pamyatnik* literally means "monument," but is now widely used to refer to members of Pamyat.

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appearance at the founding congress of the Communist party of Russia, Polozkov's outfit. Here's a sample from his speech which he read in Russian:

> The transformation of the socialist system has already begun. Part of the country is disintegrating into petty bourgeois republics. There are increasingly frequent verbal attacks on the Soviet Armed Forces, which frees the hands of foreign and domestic reactionaries. Certain Soviet politicians, including deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, are consulting with the CIA on how to cut the Soviet Armed Forces. . . . Socialism is in grave danger. If capitalism takes full power in the USSR, all remnants of truly Communist parties will be destroyed. . . . Honest Communists and politically conscious workers and peasants will be terrorized and subjected to sophisticated psychological isolation. You must block all attempts to carry out imperialist designs.

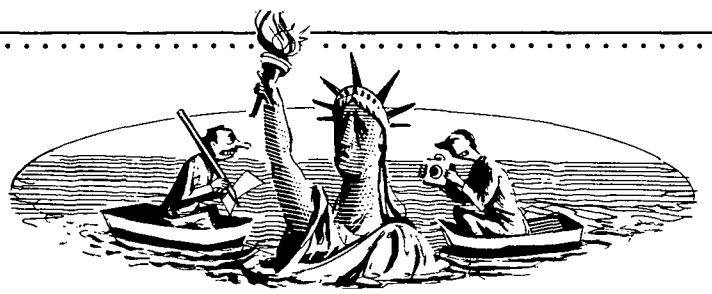
And so on, to fervent applause. *Chas Pik* reporter Alla Repina and a colleague from another Leningrad paper caught up with Lockshin in the lobby and tried to interview him about the alleged conspiracy between Soviet democrats and the CIA. Lockshin, straining to understand their Russian, pointed to his two brawny escorts and said, "Ask them." The men said that "the guest was tired," and therefore not available for interviews. One of them added that Lockshin was very active these days, meeting with factory workers and giving them the straight dope on capitalism.

If he's looking for a pen pal back home, there's Russ Christensen of Augusta, Maine, a "social democrat" whose letter appears in the November 9 *Izvestia*. "We American socialists find it difficult to comprehend the things happening in the Soviet Union today," complains Christensen, who is especially baffled and hurt that the Soviets are soliciting advice from American capitalists but not from American socialists. "It seems," he writes, "that you are abandoning a radical experiment which expresses the very essence of the socialist idea, without really giving it a chance. That is the idea that the working class is a revolutionary class which must be the mover of the revolution." The problem with the Soviet system, explains Christensen, is that it has been run by bureaucrats, not by workers themselves.[2] Similarly, the failures of Soviet agriculture are caused by top-down decision making, not absence of private ownership. Christensen concludes on a note of alarm. "In solving the food problem, you should understand, before you rush to implement our model of production, that this model helps cultivate greed. Beware of privatizing land!"

If it goes on like this, the Russians will form a pretty low opinion of the American IQ. The address of *Izvestia* is Pushkin Square 5, Moscow, USSR. Why not drop them a line? □

[2]Actually, the Bolsheviks did try worker self-management early on, with predictable results.

PRESSWATCH



SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN ON TRIAL

by Terry Eastland

I reached free-lance writer Forrest M. Mims III after he'd been a guest on another radio talk show. He did this one, like most of the three dozen others since the controversy started, by phone from his Seguin (Texas) home. The station was in Chicago, Mims's radio "opponent" some biology professor. I asked Mims how it went. The professor, he said, wound up defending him against *Scientific American*, which last year dropped plans to hire Mims to write its popular "Amateur Scientist" column—which advises on how to run homemade experiments—after it learned he disagreed with evolution and was an evangelical Christian. The magazine, Mims said the professor said, should not have judged Mims's scientific writings, which have nothing to do with evolutionary theory, on the basis of his personal beliefs.

I didn't hear the talk show, but having reviewed Mims's labors in recent months, I'm prepared to believe him. Mims, as unknown to the world as his tiny hometown, has merely managed to put the nation's oldest continuously published magazine on trial—not in the courts, mind you, but in the national media, which is where, as H. L. Mencken understood when he undertook to make a "fool" of William Jennings Bryan during the Scopes Trial in 1925, it often counts far more.

As I write in mid-December, Mims is battling on, while *Scientific American* is hoping the media will lose interest. I doubt Mims will win the way he wants to win, but he has managed to attract support from not only some talk show "opponents" but also the *New Republic*, the Texas chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, and even Bork basher Laurence Tribe of the Harvard Law School. "The BBC called today," an excited Mims told me. It's going to do a half hour documentary. "If I had a press agent," he added, "I'd probably be so busy I couldn't work." Mims is modest; he's done fine as his own flack. But it also helps that he has, as the lawyers say, good facts; "good," that is, for a media trial, though perhaps not a legal one.

The story begins with Mims himself, specifically with his boyhood ambition to write *Scientific American*'s "Amateur Scientist." The column began in 1952, when Mims was eight years old. "I do what I do today because I read the 'Amateur Scientist' when I was a kid," Mims says. Although he majored in government at Texas A&M, his passion remained the popular science of the "Amateur Scientist." Mims has had a remarkably successful career doing this sort of writing, and he says he's long wanted the chance to write the "Amateur Scientist." He sees it as "his" column and will tell you, in fact, that C. L. Stong, its longtime author, informed him before his death that "some day I would be writing the column."

Mims's résumé lists dozens of periodicals in which he's been published, including *Modern Photography*, *Physics Today*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Popular Electronics*, *Radio-Electronics*, *Computers & Electronics*, *Electronics Hobbyist*, *Electronic Design*, *Microwaves*, *PC Magazine*, *Optics News*, and *Science Digest*. He's written, he says, seventy books, with total sales exceeding three million copies, for McGraw-Hill, Prentice Hall, and Radio Shack, among others. A father of three, Mims told me he's already paid for his house. I suspect his annual royalty checks aren't too shabby; unlike most free-lancers I know, he doesn't have to live off his magazine submissions. Nonetheless, Mims always did—and still does—want to write at least for one magazine—the 650,000-circulation *Scientific American*—and specifically the column that inspired his writing career.

In the spring of 1988 Mims proposed to *Scientific American* that he take over the "Amateur Scientist." Over the next year he followed up in writing and phone calls, "pushing himself, perfectly fairly," says Armand Schwab, managing editor of *Scientific American* at the time and now retired. The editor, Jonathan Piel, phoned in late July 1989. Mims says he was asked, "How would you like to take over the 'Amateur Scientist'?" Mims took that as an offer, and in early August Piel flew the writer to New York. Timothy Appenzeller, then an associate editor with the magazine and now senior editor at the *Sciences* magazine, says that when the obviously well-qualified Mims arrived in New York, there was no other candidate for the job. Mims was it.

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According to Mims, things went swimmingly until Piel asked what other publications Mims wrote for. Mims mentioned, in addition to his many science publications, some Christian magazines. That provoked the question: About what? Bicycling, aerial photography, Mims replied. Piel then asked him whether he accepted Darwin's theory of evolution. Mims said he didn't. Mims's future as the "Amateur Scientist" columnist began to dim right there. Piel didn't offer Mims the column that afternoon. "He told me he hadn't made up his mind," says Mims.

Two weeks later, in a phone conversation with another editor from *Scientific American*, Mims says he was asked: "Are you a fundamentalist Christian?" Mims said he was a Christian, defining himself as an evangelical. (He is a Southern Baptist, a member of First Baptist Church in Seguin.) Later, says Mims, another editor asked about his views on "the sanctity of life."

In late August 1989, the magazine asked Mims to write what Schwab calls some "sample" columns. In three weeks he sent two 3,000-word pieces to the magazine. On October 4, Piel phoned Mims. Mims, concerned the magazine might discriminate against him, recorded their conversation. "On their own merits the columns are fabulous," said Piel. "What you've written is . . . first rate. [That's] not an issue. It's the—it's the public relations nightmare that's keeping me awake." As Schwab explains it, Piel was worried about what he would say to evolutionary biologists if a columnist for *Scientific American* were somehow to be associated with the creation-science movement. Appenzeller put it bluntly to the *Houston Chronicle*: "There was concern that *Scientific American* might be linked to a Flat Earther or something."

In their October 4 phone conversation, Mims, who promised Piel he would not use the column to promote his personal beliefs, told the editor, "I will not be discriminated against." The next day, Piel wrote Mims: "You referred to my concern about a possible inadvertent linking of your beliefs with the good name of this magazine as discriminatory. I take profound exception to this characterization. Indeed, I see no basis for a working relationship with anyone who would so describe my motives or actions."

There ensued a tug of war between Mims and the magazine over whether it had actually committed to publish the sample articles (Mims had sent in a third sample). By the end of the year an agreement was struck. The magazine would publish and pay for (at $2,000 per article) the three pieces, and Mims would not file charges alleging discrimination. *Scientific American* published Mims's pieces as the "Amateur Scientist" column in June, August, and October of last year, and Mims has not appeared in a court of law. But since the third of his columns was published in the October issue, Mims has been in newspapers and on the air, framing the issue as one of religious discrimination.

Mims contacted two newspapers, the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Wall Street Journal*. He says those are the only two media contacts he initiated. They have proved enough. The *Journal* published its story, by Bob Davis, on October 22. The *New York Times* followed on October 24 (with a long but un-bylined piece), and the *Washington Post* on November 1, with a front-pager by Charles Trueheart in the "Style" section. The wire services picked up the story, and the radio talk shows followed, some 1,000 radio stations amplifying Mims's complaint. (Curiously, none of the four networks has gone to Seguin, Texas.)

Showing as much savvy as the Reagan White House communications wizards who lined up support for the President's policies *before* he announced them, Mims as early as last August petitioned the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility of the American Association for the Advancement of Science to take his side. The committee didn't go quite that far, but did the next best thing. In a letter to Mims, it expressed its commitment "to the principle that articles submitted for publication in journals devoted to science, technology and medicine should be judged exclusively on their scientific merit. A person's private behavior or religious or political beliefs or affiliations should not serve as criteria in the evaluation of articles submitted for publication." Further, the committee said: "We emphasize, in particular, the consensus of the Committee that even if a person holds religiously derived beliefs that conflict with views commonly held in the scientific community, those beliefs should not influence decisions about publication of scientific articles unless the beliefs are reflected in the articles." The AAAS letter was dated October 29, 1990, just in time to be folded into the *Post* story and those that followed.

The next day Lamar Hankins of the Texas affiliate of the ACLU wrote *Scientific American* to express dismay "about the [magazine's] refusal . . . to honor its offer to employ Forrest M. Mims III as its 'Amateur Scientist' " columnist on account of "his religious beliefs." "I urge you to stop this apparent blacklisting of Mr. Mims now, before it spreads to other publications and to other scientists. . . . Religious freedom is an essential value in our society, a value that should be protected and strengthened, not threatened and subverted." The Texas ACLU spoke just in time to make the *Post* account.

It has also helped Mims's side of the story considerably that former editors Schwab and Appenzeller have been willing to state for the record that the Texan should have been hired. Meanwhile, as for *Scientific American*, it has told the media that it has never discriminated against anyone for religious or any other reasons, thus accepting the terms of debate framed by Mims.

From his point of view, Mims could hardly ask for better coverage. Not that it has always been accurate. It is by no means clear that Mims was in fact offered the column, as the *Houston Chronicle* reported when breaking the story (and as Mims himself continues to claim). My reporting persuades me that Mims was never formally offered the column, but that until early August there was a strong expectation among editors at the magazine that the column would be given to him. Also, generally unexplored by the media is the personal element that might have been at work, to wit: Mims saying in the October 4 phone conversation that he would not be discriminated against, which Piel took as a personal affront. I'm not saying Mims would have been offered the column had he not said that; the thing was off the rails by then anyway. "My impression," says Schwab, is "that Jonathan got so upset at being called discriminatory that he quit the whole thing."

Whatever the truth there, the larger truth is that Piel on August 7 had started down a path that made Mims's personal beliefs relevant to the decision not to offer him the column—a point the magazine has conceded in a letter to Mims saying that what "you characterize as 'religious discrimination' was merely the expressed concern of [Piel] that association of the magazine's name with your views concerning evolution could harm the cause of science and alienate crucial groups of authors or readers." While Mims probably could not have won an employment discrimination lawsuit, because employers have a degree of latitude in hiring that would seem to protect *Scientific American* in this instance, it is this larger truth that has elicited sympathy for Mims on the part of journalists. "Virtually all the reporters have been very sensitive," says Mims. "Many have told me that their concern is that this could happen to them, too." For the media, the issue has been civil liberties, not evolution, and Mims has been savvy to frame it this way.

Mims has undertaken this media battle to "get back," as he puts it, a column he never quite had. That's not going to happen. For one thing, the "Amateur Scientist" is no longer that; it's being rethought, and it may not appear under that heading, if at all. (If the column has seen its last day, Mims can take consolation in the fact that his byline was its last ever.) For another, and more importantly, it's hard to imagine that Mims would be allowed to write anything for *Scientific American*, given the attitudes toward the writer in its offices. "There's no official policy on that," says the publisher, John Moehling, "but from my point of view, after the kind of accusations he's made, I can't imagine him being comfortable in our group and our group being comfortable with him."

Forrest Mims should be writing today the column he so clearly would have been good at. *Scientific American*'s worry about "a possible inadvertent linking" of Mims's beliefs "with the good name of this magazine" is irrational unless one irrationally assumes that its readership is also irrational.

One must hope that Mims's effort to publicize his story at least will have a deterrent effect. The Mims affair has demonstrated the "public relations nightmare" a magazine can have when it acts like *Scientific American*. Mims is no rube, as his own skillful campaign shows; Seguin, Texas, can beat New York City. And today—*pace* H. L. Mencken—the press cannot automatically be counted on to dismiss people who dissent from evolution as village

REFLECTIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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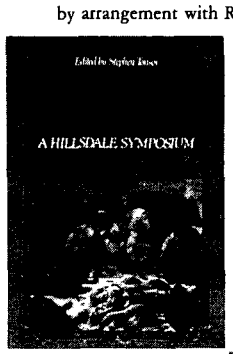

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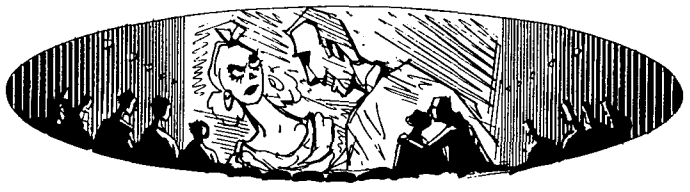
idiots. If there's a civil liberties question involved, the press will do fine by the plaintiff in a media trial.

Finally, it bears noting that the beliefs of evolutionary biologists imply a philosophical system that excludes a Creator. Thus, for them, theistic evolution is a contradiction in terms; the alternatives are two and only two: creation or evolution, God or not God. While Mims has not developed an alternative theory to evolution—he says he's never written on the subject—he does believe in God, and he was willing to say as much to the editor of *Scientific American*. Mims knows that if he had never volunteered that he'd written a few pieces for Christian magazines—on some awfully tame subjects—he'd be writing the "Amateur Scientist" today. To his credit, Mims refused to abide by the demands of secular etiquette. Even more striking than Mims's telling the editor of the *Scientific American* that he is a Christian was his failure to confess, when asked about it pointblank, to the theory of evolution. This was more than a breach of etiquette—it was heresy.

The Forrest Mims story ultimately comes down to the remarkable influence that Darwinian fundamentalism has on institutions of science like *Scientific American*. The doctrine of evolution is what's "politically correct," and woe betide those who express dissent. Just ask Forrest Mims, and meanwhile pray for the species. □

THE TALKIES



HOMES REARRANGED

by James Bowman

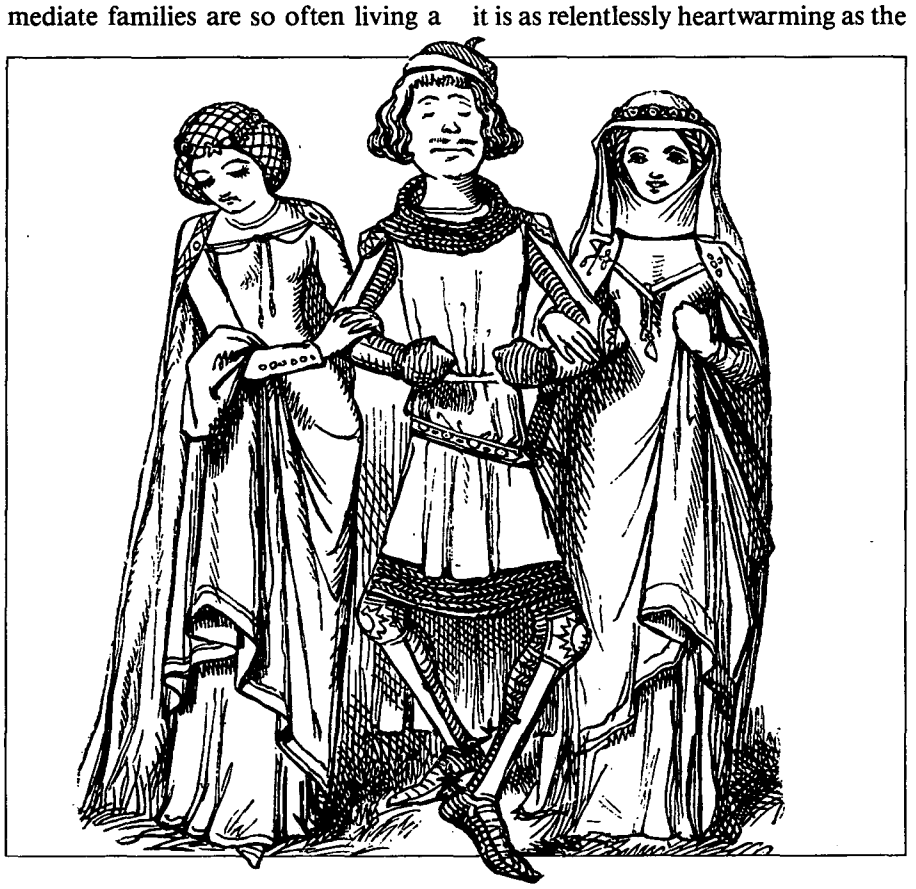
America's rediscovery of her Romantic roots in each new generation is a spectacle of endless fascination. Just now the Noble Savage is having one of his periodic comebacks, and the results are visible in Kevin Costner's epic, *Dances with Wolves*. Here the Lakota (better known to the shoot-'em-up genre of Western as the Sioux) are as handsome, gentle, wise, and in touch with nature as the U.S. Cavalry are ugly, violent, stupid, and in touch with nature the way a bulldozer is. Small wonder that Kevin Costner's character, Lt. John Dunbar, decides to forsake the latter for the former, to commit cultural suicide instead of the physical kind that eludes him on a Civil War battlefield.

The film's simple-minded moral is disturbingly at odds with the cinematic sophistication with which it is brought to the screen. If you can get over the Romantic flapdoodle about what we have since learned to call "Native Americans" or, better still, if you're a bit of a flapdoodler yourself (as which of us is not?), you will enjoy this warm tribute to the native virtue of our savage brethren. For there is a core of truth in the distinction it draws between civilization and primitive or tribal existence. Shakespeare's *Tempest* makes much the same point. But Shakespeare makes an accommodation with reality that I think more important than Kevin Costner does, since he refuses to engage in sentimentally idealizing Caliban.

At one point, Costner/Dunbar tells us in voice-over that the words that most often came to mind to describe the Lakota way of life were "family" and "harmony," and here lie the keys to understanding why the appeal of the primitive remains so powerful even in a world about as far removed from that of the Indian tribes of the Great Plains as it is possible to imagine. On the one hand, America was settled by people wanting nothing more than to escape from the claustrophobic, quasi-tribal world of various European agricultural backwaters; on the other hand, the social fragmentation that they encountered here created a nostalgia for belonging which has always tended to express itself in sentimentalizing that simpler world they left behind.

"Family" is especially problematical. As George Burns said, the most wonderful thing in the world is a warm, loving, close-knit family that lives a long way away. Now that even our most immediate families are so often living a long way away—now that, as some sociologists warn, the step-family will be the most common sort of household in America by the turn of the century—we look to the popular culture of the cinema and television to provide us with images of unconventional families that, somehow, *work*. The smash hit *Three Men and a Baby* of 1987 did something to assuage our collective anxiety on this head. It was so cute and wholesome that it was as if June Cleaver had decided to take the Beaver and go live in a commune.

Now they've at last got around to making the inevitable sequel, called *Three Men and a Little Lady*, and it is as relentlessly heartwarming as the original. Moreover, it includes the most ludicrous caricature of the English since Dick Van Dyke tried to impersonate a cockney chimney-sweep in *Mary Poppins*. Just as the U.S. Cavalry is a convenient symbol for the evils of civilization in *Dances with Wolves*, so a British boarding school, run on Dickensian lines, serves the same function in *Three Men* Mark II. When the wicked British would-be stepfather finally reveals himself in his true colors, it is to snarl that the eponymous "little lady" (the baby of Mark I, now five years old) "will learn some manners at school."



Manners! Not since Miss Watson attempted to learn Huck Finn some manners have we cottoned to *that* kind of talk. Children are the Noble (or not so noble) Savages that live in our midst, and a lot of the trouble with American education can be traced to our Romantic unwillingness to force them too precipitately from their natural state of savagery. The more typically American view of childhood is to be found in the first hit of the Christmas season, John Hughes's *Home Alone*. Here the little savage is not only blessed by nature with the skills necessary to survive without *any* parents as he is accidentally left behind when the rest of his family goes on vacation, he is actually the guardian and preserver of the family home against a couple of marauding burglars.

What does such a child want or need from parents? When he first realizes that he is alone, his excited reaction is that "I've made my family disappear!" In the end, of course, he is glad to see the rest of it back, but only because he misses the company, not because he is socially or personally defined by it. That is another reason why we are so ready to believe in the virtue, or at least

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the non-vice, of the unconventional family in films like *Three Men and a Little Lady*: so long as a child's sense of personal worth is fostered by a loving mama and a pack of indulgent uncles, what other sort of nurturing do you need? A traditional papa who administers traditional discipline when he gets home from work?

Naturally, there is a feminist side to the whole question of innovation in family structures. The new Cher vehicle, called *Mermaids* for reasons that are never quite made clear, states it very succinctly: fathers may be nice but they are more often absent and always unnecessary. The elder of Cher's two daughters (played by Winona Ryder) nurses an unhealthy longing for the return of a father whom she only knows from a photograph of his shoes. So much so, indeed, that she immerses herself in patriarchal religion (pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism) and aspires to become a nun, although the family is Jewish. At one point she runs away from home and briefly joins a "normal" family with "a real live father actually living at home with his wife and children. It's perfect; it's like television." (This is 1963, remember.)

Well, she's got to learn. Her scatty mother may or may not stop running away from men and problems—up until now the two have been synonymous—when she meets a sensitive and caring shoe-salesman played by Bob Hoskins (the shoe motif de serves further exploration), but the daughter must accept the wacky, feminine world her mother has crafted for the family. Running away in imagination from the all but inescapable reality of papalessness is a worse sin. The assassination of President Kennedy not only serves as a cheap generator of emotional energy in the film but also reminds us all that father figures, like fathers, are inherently unreliable.

To be fair, this is not a particularly hard-edged version of feminism: there is almost a wistful quality to the pathos of sexual impasse and the inevitability of the absent male. A more interesting and at the same time frightening version of the feminist parable is to be found in *The Krays*, which recounts the real-life story of the Kray twins, Reggie and Ronnie, who were dominant figures in the underworld of London in the 1960s. If the benign tolerance of a female-headed-household produces no worse social mutation than the eccentric but lovable sisters of *Mermaids*, it produces something much more disturbing in *The Krays*.

The film's ethos is summed up in the gnomic maxim of the hard-bitten old granny that "men are born children and they stay children; they think they are in control, but they don't know the half of it." Here is the ultimate in illusory "control": two tough-guy brothers and their all-male criminal gang who inspire such terror in those with whom they come in contact that their rule of the streets is unchallenged. "Glamour is fear," they believe, and their lives are a testimony to the fact: "If people are afraid of you, you can just do anything."

Yet their fists and guns and knives are mere toys compared to the tools of emotional dominance that their mother, grandmother, and aunt employ against them. Moreover, not only are the women cleverer in their methods of manipulation, they are also tougher in the long run. In one memorable passage, the aunt recalls the underside of life on the home front during the Second World War when, as the men engaged in another of their macabre games of war, serious-minded women heartlessly held the social fabric together. "If they drained that lake," she says, "they'd find nothing but bullets and babies. Bullets and babies." Some kind of family life here remains intact, but at a terrible cost in secret ruthlessness, horror, and abortion, all of which must be borne in impassive silence.

There is a deep, old-world pessimism about this English film when you set it beside the rather tediously optimistic American versions of attenuated family relationships. It is as if the traditional family is less a lost ideal, requiring comic ingenuity in those who must make shift without it, than an evil in itself—something which presupposes the tragedy of its collapse. There is something of the same, European attitude about Diane Kurys's film *C'est la vie*, in which divorce is not an unfortunate calamity but a mere given, an inevitability in certain intractable circumstances. Only its consequences, not its roots, are available for examination.

This, too, is a woman's film, but in the sense that I simply felt excluded from it. The forsaken husband has no more rights in the film's dramatic structure than he does in his broken marriage: we can only pity his pain as a curiously alien version of the pain that everyone involved feels about an unavoidable break-up. The film's point of interest is in the relationship between the divorcing mother and her step-sister, the pregnant mother, who is with half her mind the disapproving moralist and guardian of family values and with the other half the fascinated woman who envies her friend the romance and excitement of an affair with a glamorous artist.

But if American cinematic families are, by contrast, fraught with possibilities for new and interesting variations on the traditional theme, tradition itself, when it is not merely a nostalgic appendix, turns into conventionality and tends to excite contempt. Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* offers us a curiously lighthearted version of suburban gothic romance which plays off the banality of everyday life in a middle-class housing development against the grotesquerie of a modern Promethean creation rather in the way that Mel Brooks's *Young Frankenstein* did back in the seventies. All the stereotypes of hypocritical respectability are there, but it is impossible to be angry with them because they are so stylized and overdrawn. You've just got to laugh at a neighborhood barbecue brought about by the advent of a boy who has scissors for hands and who lives at the home of the local Avon lady.

Edward (Johnny Depp) is another kind of Noble Savage: the ideal blank slate created by a comically weird Frankenstein figure (Vincent Price) and untainted by contact with civilization. Needless to say, he has an innate ethical sense which, while it is not approved by civilized morality, is a higher and better thing because it is more authentic, more compassionate, more in tune with primitive loyalties. In fact, Mr. Scissorhands could have joined up with the Lakota buffalo hunters of *Dances with Wolves*, no questions asked. And just think what a job he could have done on those buffalo hides!

Burton constantly emphasizes the absurdity of his vision, placing the gothic mansion of the mad scientist, for example, at the end of a street of suburban ranch houses and effecting the discovery of his grotesque hero by the determination of an Avon lady sniffing out a sale. "My, what a big house," she says as she climbs the vertiginous stair to the loft where this Caliban lives: "thank goodness for my aerobics classes!" Yet laughter at such incongruities as Edward's talent for hedge sculpture—every bush on the block becomes a topiary masterpiece, mostly in vaguely dinosaurian shape—and ladies' coiffure is uneasy. There is *something* serious about this farrago of absurdities told in the form of a fairy tale, but we are not quite sure what it is.

Well, at bottom it is yet another example of American schizophrenia about social and familial cohesion. We admire the innocent outsider, the Noble Savage, the new creation uncorrupted by the traditional hypocrisies on which civilized life is based, yet we recognize him as a lonely figure, someone who must be driven back into his solitary lair by an out-raged community of individualists lest he remind them of the primitive values of, well, harmony and family, which their world has jettisoned in order to come into being. We love that olde worlde gothic mansion and the paradoxically purer form of humanity it contains, but only if we don't have to live too close to it. □

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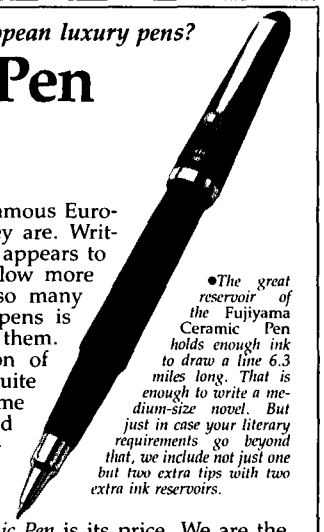

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MORLEY CALLAGHAN, 1903–1990

Rick Marin

Famous for knocking down Ernest Hemingway in a boxing match in Paris, Morley Callaghan was one of the hottest young literary properties of the 1920s and became one of the handful of writers that Canada has produced with a claim to the adjective "great." Yet, when he died in August of last year at the age of 87, his obituary did not make the front page of the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's newspaper of record. To be slighted even in death was the story of Morley Callaghan's life.

Called by Edmund Wilson "the most unjustly neglected writer of the English-speaking world," Callaghan published his first novel, *Strange Fugitive*, at twenty-five and his last, *A Wild Old Man on the Road*, sixty years later. Though still widely available in Canada, none of his two dozen titles is in print in the United States today. Bookstores well-stocked with inferior Canadian imports (Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies) have never heard of him. The only place to find Callaghan here is a library, or second-hand shop, which is where I recently came across a worn paperback of *That Summer in Paris*, his 1963 memoir of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, et al. Somehow I'd managed to spend the first two decades of my life in Toronto, in a house not minutes from Callaghan's own, without having read (or at least retained) anything he had written. I saw him walk past our front door many times and once at a reading of his penultimate novel, *A Time for Judas*. He was a small, frail old man with a surprisingly forceful voice. It was impossible to believe he had ever knocked down anyone, let alone Ernest Hemingway.

Callaghan met Hemingway at the *Toronto Star*, where they worked together in the mid-1920s, one a cub reporter, the other a swaggering foreign correspondent. Hemingway thought Callaghan's stories "big-time stuff" and encouraged his awed acolyte to keep at it. (One such story, published in *American Caravan*, got him an invitation to New York from Maxwell Perkins at Scribner's.) In 1929 he made the pilgrimage to Paris with his wife Loretto, and soon found himself steeped in the liquid life and poisonous gossip of The Quarter's expatriate colonists: James Joyce, Ford Madox Ford, Sylvia Beach, Robert McAlmon, Michael Arlen. Caught between Hemingway and Fitzgerald's prickly feuding, he exacerbated it during the boxing contest that, despite his efforts to play it down, would become the most celebrated event in Morley Callaghan's long life.

The two sparred regularly at the American Club. The time Callaghan knocked Hemingway to the mat, Fitzgerald was keeping time and became so engrossed by the bout that he let the round go longer than three minutes. Hemingway was furious:

> "Christ!" Ernest yelled. He got up. He was silent for a few seconds. Scott, staring at his watch, was mute and wondering. I wished I were miles away. "All right, Scott," Ernest said savagely. "If you want to see me getting the shit knocked out of me, just say so. Only don't say you made a mistake," and he stomped off to the shower room to wipe the blood from his mouth.

In later years Hemingway would dismiss the affair as a drunken lark, though Callaghan maintains that they were all quite sober.

What's most remarkable about Callaghan's memoir *is* its sobriety. Dispassion would be the wrong word; he shows remarkable compassion for these vain, brilliant egotists around him. Hemingway, he observes, "kept death in his work as a Medieval scholar might have kept a skull on his desk." The most junior of the group, this clear-headed, self-assured Canadian seems even then to have had the oldest soul. After nine months he packed it up and took it home.

In his native Toronto, Callaghan would write many good novels and a few great ones. Their themes: faith, justice, innocence, and experience. A young priest devotes himself to the material and spiritual salvation of two indigent prostitutes, sacrificing his collar and sanity to his obsession (*Such Is My Beloved*, 1934). An ex-con trying to go straight is hounded by his underworld past (*More Joy in Heaven*, 1937). For brightening a banker's drab life and blamelessly ending it, a well-liked public relations man becomes a pariah, falsely accused and feverishly bent on vindication (*The Many Colored Coat*, 1960). Outcasts, social misfits, martyrs—these are the painfully isolated protagonists of Callaghan's spare prose. His Biblical titles and mad priests invite comparisons to Graham Greene, but Greene's prescriptive moral tone is absent. Callaghan never subscribes to political messianism, even in his novels of the 1930s. He is profoundly concerned with moral behavior but loath to judge. His Catholicism, influenced by his friend Jacques Maritain, inclines toward charity and tolerance. His sinners are usually forgiven.

"The truth about any man is pretty hard to tell," a character says in *The Many Colored Coat*, "because someone else always has another angle on him." The book's two bitter enemies, divided over the death of a mutual friend and the eponymous garment, become prisoners of their "angles" on each other. They meet on a Montreal street:

> It was an awkward moment. They both wanted to speak, reach a peaceful settlement. But they were so far apart now that neither one trusted the first words he would have to use, or any words needed to tell what was in his heart; they shared for the moment that helpless angry feeling. There was no way of communicating, nor showing any recognition of what they felt almost furtively as a desperate need. There was nothing left to say.

Modernist by way of daily newspapering, Callaghan shared Hemingway's affinity for direct speech and his distrust of literary ornament. He admired the "appleness" of Cezanne's apples. "I remember deciding," he says in *That Summer*, "that the root of the trouble with writing was that poets and story writers used language to evade, to skip away from the object, because they could never bear to face the thing freshly and see it freshly for what it was in itself." Metaphors and descriptive indulgences are rare in Callaghan's writing. Everything serves the panoptic narrative, whose rise and fall he plots with expert calibration. Declared another admirer, Sinclair Lewis: "Here is magnificently the seeing eye."

Callaghan's intense curiosity about the motives of human action and his quietly sympathetic voice exert an inexorable pull. You hardly notice the sly, subtle tug of his prose, his gift for snapshot description with telling cadences, as when he describes a young priest's vacillation between human and divine love:

> He saw that Midge was getting sleepy. Once he yawned himself. They both lay back and began to doze. Then Father Dowling sat up abruptly, saw Midge's eyes closed, saw how long her lashes were, and how her lips were parted and her breast was softly swelling, and he went out without disturbing her.

"I was loyal to my search for the sacramental in the daily lives of people," Callaghan told an interviewer in 1983. "To find the extraordinary in the ordinary—this used to be the great and only aim of art." A modernist in style and theme, he seems never to have been a "contemporary" writer. His fictional lives are decorated with a minimum of period detail, and the moral dilemmas his characters face up to have as much relevance to secular as religious readers. His sincerity, sensible balance of reason and emotion, strong but self-effacing voice, shrewd sense of irony—all these seem identifiably Canadian traits, though Callaghan was never a cultural nationalist. His novella *The Varsity Story* (1948), routinely dismissed as a nostalgic valedictory to the University of Toronto, is in fact a cleverly disguised inquiry into his country's elusive national identity.

Edmund Wilson tried to revive Callaghan's reputation in a series of articles

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Rick Marin is the television critic for the Washington Times.

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for the *New Yorker* in the 1960s. The first was a review, extremely favorable, of *That Summer in Paris*, praising its author's "gift of moral objectivity" and kindred ability to rise above the expatriate fray. Allowing that Callaghan's prose lacked the lyricism and emotion of Fitzgerald or Hemingway, he deemed his art "more subtle" and his intelligence "more mature." Callaghan, Wilson wrote, "is so much interested in moral character as exhibited in other people's behavior that, unlike his two exhibitionistic friends, he never shows himself at all." The conventional Canadian wisdom on Callaghan was always that he was a master of the short story but wanting as a novelist. "Very interesting failures," one assessment patronizingly deemed his long fiction. Wilson, in a letter, reported getting in trouble for making the opposite claim: that the novels were more interesting than the stories for their larger themes and the depth of their characters. This audacious heresy was viewed as Yankee imperialism. But he was right.

Although his countrymen conferred prizes and accolades upon Callaghan throughout his career, although his stories were published in American magazines and anthologies, he always felt underestimated beyond his own borders and underappreciated within them.[1] His reputation fell victim to what Wilson identified as "the general incapacity—apparently shared by his compatriots—for believing that a writer whose work may be mentioned without absurdity in association with Chekhov's and Turgenev's can possibly be functioning in Toronto." For a decade (1938-48), which he called "the dark period of my life," he stopped publishing fiction altogether, and became a full-time radio commentator for the CBC. In *A Fine and Private Place* (1975), an American critic bearing a strong resemblance to Wilson champions a neglected Toronto novelist who bears a strong resemblance to Callaghan. Even though the book is deeply autobiographical—the novelist even lives on the same street as Callaghan—its central character is not the novelist but the young scholar studying him. It's also, as the title makes clear, not in the least self-pitying. Callaghan *chose* to live and work in Toronto. He regarded his relative obscurity with ironic resignation, not bitterness. The title page of one of his plays reads "Published from The House of Exile/20 Dale Avenue, Toronto"—his home address.

Callaghan once remarked that while studying law—he was called to the bar the year before he left for Paris—he read "case books on human nature." In his fiction he learned to write them. □

[1]*From Ink Lake: Candian Stories*, edited by Michael Ondaatje (Viking, $24.95), a new, 714-page anthology featuring fifty Canadian writers, leaves Callaghan out altogether.

PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE: THE LAST CAMPAIGN OF THE COLD WAR

Sidney Blumenthal/HarperCollins/386 pp. $22.95

Victor Gold

Mr. Blumenthal can barely suppress his fury as he describes how Mr. Dukakis squandered his lead and turned a likely Democratic victory into a decisive defeat.
—Alan Brinkley, *New York Times*, October 14, 1990

Sid Blumenthal is pissed. Oh, is he ever. Like some Miniver Cheevy of the Bourbon Left, he weeps and sighs for what is not and dreams of Thebes and Camelot. Especially Camelot.

A cursed decade, the 1980s. Reagan regnant, the evil empire of a conservative White House casting the best and the brightest of the generation of the sixties into political exile. Yet, toward the very end, there was a chance, a glimmer of light. Iran-contra, that was the ticket: "Now Reagan had been brought down," writes Blumenthal. "The blow that had felled him had not been delivered by the opposition but by Reagan's own men. . . . It might be 1976 all over again—the Watergate disaster, the Democratic triumph. Not only could the prostrate Reagan be side-stepped, so could his discredited conservatism."

But more: beyond Reagan's travail, Blumenthal could take comfort in the obvious vulnerability of George Bush as a presidential candidate; not to mention the incandescent liberalism of Miniver's early choice for the Democratic nomination, Gary Hart—a shining Lancelot who *worshipped* John F. Kennedy: "To Hart, Kennedy was not a figure of ideology, or the end of ideology, but of civic virtue. His appearance enabled Hart to see how to transmute his religious enthusiasm into a political calling."

Alas, young Lancelot. Who could have predicted that Hart would carry his down-pat impersonation of Kennedy a step too far? First, he began moving in the company of a Louisiana high-roller, a pal of Governor Edwin Edwards known as "Billy B."; next thing Miniver knew, instead of his candidate's theorizing about "a new framework for American politics—a revolutionary 'paradigm shift,'" * Hart was aboard the *Monkey Business*, his religious enthusiasm transmuted into loose-zipper trouble. Oh, sure, JFK would have understood, but in a political age conditioned by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, Lancelot was a goner.

Exit Gary Hart. Enter, of all dreary possibilities, a Democratic front-runner who "did not see the ideological dimension of issues." Miniver groaned.

After thirty years, the presidential campaign chronicle, a genre invented by Theodore H. White, has become something of a post-election literary cliché. White himself recognized that the form had played out as far back as 1972, when he announced that he was bringing his series, begun with *The Making of the President 1960*, to a close. But though the journalist who started it all quit the game, others, for their own reasons, persevere.

One reason is that, given the outcome of most presidential elections in recent decades—Republicans winning five of the last six—writing a chronicle to explain how-it-all-happened has a certain therapeutic value for despondent liberals. Consider the first of this sub-genre, Joe McGinnis's *The Selling of the President 1968*, which explicated, in terms that manic Nixonphobes could both understand and chuckle over, how their nemesis managed to beat Hubert Humphrey: he cheated. How? By contriving, with the aid of sinister public-opinion manipulators like Roger Ailes, to wear pancake makeup to cover his five o'clock shadow. Voilà, the "new Nixon."

Twenty years later, Nixon, old and new, may be retired, but for bloodied left-wing ideologues there is still Roger Ailes to kick around. Ailes and the rest of George Bush's "handlers" in 1988, writes Blumenthal in *Pledging Allegiance*, "encompassed much of the experience of the Republican party since 1969":

> It was then, with Richard Nixon's victory, that the permanent campaign system, rooted in post-industrial technology, specifically computers and telecommunications, supplanted the old party system. In the permanent campaign, the consultants replaced the bosses as the enduring figures in politics, regardless of who was elected. The means of campaigning—control over the images projected by the media—became the means of governing.

And there you have it: Bush's victory, no less than Nixon's, had nothing to do with the failure of liberalism, either as a campaign nexus or as a means of governing. It had everything to do with Max Factor, the Macintosh II, and the malign ability of Republican campaign consultants to bamboozle the American voter in the dismal age of post-industrial technology.

But wait: Don't Democratic presidential candidates, as much as Republicans, operate within a post-industrial campaign structure, surrounded by "handlers" whose aim it is to "control . . . the images projected by the media"? Indeed they do. But, for Blumenthal's polemical purpose, that's beside the point.

True, Hubert Humphrey made his presidential run with a full complement of PR/advertising specialists and cosmeticians, the first to shine his dull image, the second to dull his shiny forehead; and yes, even Gary Hart was more the product of Supermedia image projection (what else are the Iowa caucuses?) than his paradigmatic new ideas. But, sad to say, however "discredited" their conservatism may be, Republicans just seem to be better at this sort of thing. From Nixon's base appeal to the Silent Majority to Bush's making an ugly to-do about the pledge of allegiance, the party of the right has demonstrated, in quadrennial cycles, a pernicious knack for connecting with what Robert Kennedy once called the dark side of the American soul.

George Bush as Darth Vader. And for that—Lancelot having screwed his way out of the contest—what does the party of the left send forth to meet this challenge? A petty little technocrat with an "ideology of managerialism."

It is Sidney Blumenthal's considered judgment that the end of the Cold War, far from confirming the wisdom of Ronald Reagan's hard-line approach to dealing with the Soviets, proved just the opposite. Reagan and his brand of extreme-right anti-Communism had it wrong from the beginning. Soviet totalitarianism was never a serious threat to the West. By the time Reagan arrived at the White House, argues Blumenthal, it was an infirm ideological edifice, waiting for a man of vision to bring it down. Mikhail Gorbachev, of course.

To Blumenthal it followed from this ultimate discrediting of Reagan conservatism that, despite George Bush's perfidious handlers, the 1988 presidential race was there to be won if the right Democrat had come along. Hart, who had actually spent *four hours* with

Victor Gold is The American Spectator*'s national correspondent.*

*Jim Pinkerton, you devil you. So *that's* where you got that paradigmatic gibberish—out of Gary Hart's grab bag of New Ideas.

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Gorbachev in Moscow ("the pinnacle of his campaign and career") was the obvious choice; but that was not to be, so it remained for Michael Dukakis to rise to the occasion.

Not a chance. Blumenthal knew it from the moment in Atlanta when Dukakis, in his acceptance speech, "was skeptical of Gorbachev's revolution":

> He did not take his cue from Kennedy's acceptance speech: "The old era is ending. The old ways will not do."

A bad enough beginning, but things were to get even worse. What it came down to, in Blumenthal's view, was the candidate's callow refusal to embrace the L-word. Asked by Ted Koppel to define the word "liberal," Dukakis hemmed, hawed, and "instead of restating his party's tradition . . . abandoned it." A far cry from what Blumenthal sees as John F. Kennedy's "open defense of liberalism" in the 1960 presidential campaign.

But hold on: Isn't that particular invidious comparison a bit unfair to the Democratic presidential candidate of 1988? I mean—just to keep the historical record straight—wasn't Kennedy's embrace of the L-word a matter of strategic urgency, an effort to shore up his base with Democratic liberals? In fact, wasn't Kennedy, pre-Camelot, distrusted by the keepers of "his party's tradition," who viewed him as Joe Kennedy's playboy son? More important, hadn't a sea-change occurred between 1960 and 1988 in the American people's perception of liberalism and what it connotes—a change reflected by the advent of Reaganism and the exile of the best and the brightest to the intellectual sancta of Harvard Yard and the *New Republic*?

Miniver coughs. Ah, the Bourbon Left, God bless: they know everything, forget everything, and remain, as Sidney Blumenthal reminds us in this requiem to a lightweight, the best thing the party of the right has going for it in the post-Reagan nineties. □

THE IVORY TRADE: MUSIC AND THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC AT THE VAN CLIBURN INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

Joseph Horowitz/Summit Books/290 pp. $21.95

R. J. Stove

Joseph Horowitz first achieved (ill) fame in this journal four years ago as the perpetrator of *Understanding Toscanini*, a simultaneously petulant and supercilious attack on the twentieth century's greatest conductor ("understanding" being, of course, a voguish musicological euphemism for "slagging off"). Our editor's pitiless demolition of Horowitz's arguments would have scared a less assured sage off critical commentary for life; but no, here is Horowitz again, and on the whole to surprisingly good effect.

The new volume at least does its subject the credit of displaying clear authorial interest, whereas Toscanini served merely as a punching bag on which Horowitz could take out all his grievances against elitism, "museum culture," concert goers who prefer Beethoven to Edgard Varèse, anyone who shows insufficient reverence towards T. W. Adorno, *et hoc genus omne*. Of concern for music, as distinct from joy in punitive ideologizing, *Understanding Toscanini* showed not a trace.

The Ivory Trade (eleven out of ten for the title, zero out of ten for the logorrhoeic subtitle) marks a substantial betterment in its writer's intellectual condition: not that this state readily admitted of further decline. Vestiges of the unregenerate Horowitz remain. There is the statutory New Class lament, this time about the alleged oppression of women pianists. Worse are such neologistic gems as "fetishize," "pathology of social dislocation," and (wait for it) "sacralization-to-popularization sequence." One does realize that intelligibility is these days as grave a handicap for aspiring scribblers as heterosexuality and patriotism; but one rather hoped that Horowitz (who *can* write well, when he wishes) had acquired a keen enough sense of the ridiculous to stop him indulging in obfuscation at this exalted level.

Piano competitions as presently constituted are a fitting object of spleen, and of very little else. Like all manifestations of the *Zeitgeist*, they inspire in their rare defenders the most precious claims to long tradition, while being in fact nearly as recent and aberrant as drug-fueled Olympics. Before the late 1950s, competitions played next to no role in determining the success or failure of pianists: that depended on numerous variables, among which such reactionary concepts as talent and communicativeness predominated. The notion that (say) Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Cortot, and Schnabel needed for their validation the verdict of Twelve Angry Men would have struck these musicians' hearers—to say nothing of the musicians themselves—as pure moonshine.

The 1958 Moscow Tchaikovsky competition, won by Van Cliburn, was the earliest of music's recognizably modern competitive events. "The American Sputnik," they called Cliburn in total seriousness; and Cliburn's subsequent career amply justified such symbolism, since for all the impact he had as a concert artist during the next thirty years he might as well have been in outer space. Yet, if arts administrators ever deduced a moral from Cliburn's fate, they kept this deduction an impenetrable secret. There were, according to Horowitz, over ten times as many international piano competitions in 1970 as 1950; there are over twice as many now as existed in 1970. America alone currently holds more than sixty of them.

How could it be otherwise? In an age when aesthetic realism is king, but when (through either residual common sense or simple cowardice) outward meritocratic decencies must sometimes be maintained, piano competitions' proliferation is inevitable. Audiences between 1800 and 1950 knew, when confronted with a Liszt or a Rachmaninoff, that they were beholding a titan. Audiences since 1950 have seldom had any such certainty; and even when they have been confident of witnessing greatness, their confidence hardly ever translates into career success for the object of their admiration. "Gee, I'm only a humble member of an audience, I'm doubtless a Philistine, my judgments may well be wrong; we gotta leave judgment to the Experts." That the Experts might be half-witted, insane, devoted to mediocrity, bent on avenging their own career failures, or privately sodomizing those whom they purport to assess—these contingencies are apparently irrelevant. "Do anything, commit any sin, rather than acknowledge *vox populi*": these words could stand as the motto of every great piano competition, just as they could of every latter-day Nobel literature award or government-funded Jackson Pollock retrospective. Add to this gnostic belief our horrendous oversupply of full-time pianists, which has been caused by the pandemic educational doctrine that "anyone can be a world-beater," and the reasons for piano competitions' reprehensibility are even more obvious.[1]

Most of those whom Horowitz mentions in *The Ivory Trade* are refreshingly cynical. It provokes healthy *Schadenfreude* to read that competition organizers in their quest for willing adjudicators are increasingly obliged to choose nonentities, as most of the world's best living pianists now want to avoid jury duty. Michelangeli, Louis Kentner, and Martha Argerich have all angrily resigned from juries in the recent past; Claudio Arrau has admitted that "piano competitions . . . are anti-art"; Rubinstein in his old age repeatedly denounced the results of the Rubinstein Competition.

One of the very few Horowitz interviewees who retains intact his illusions on the subject is Richard Rodzinski, appointed the Cliburn Competition's director in 1986. Rodzinski passionately defends the "need" for every competition to bestow a first prize, never mind how nondescript the prizewinner: "No first prize is a *bad* idea. Everybody down the line feels castigated. *All* the contestants feel they've been slapped." In other words, what interests Rodzinski and his thinkalikes is not whether contestants are any good, but how their egos can be massaged. Long ago on Australian television, there was a comedy series about a department store whose senile manager greeted every employee—no matter how idle, incompetent, or thievish—with the tremulously spoken sentence "Well, you've all done *very well*." What seemed in the Australia of 1975 a surrealistic joke has become, in the America of 1991, a credo.

It is no use throwing awards around like confetti; the competitive instinct is as old as identifiable human nature. As far back as the twelfth century, the minnesangers of what is now Germany had started formally vying with each other for musical acclamation. The mastersingers of Luther's era did the same; so did Handel and Scarlatti in 1708; so did Mozart and Muzio Clementi in 1781. But these were jousts in which expressiveness, bravura, compositional coherence, and improvisational flair were tested to the utmost. If those criteria (rather than mere performing-fleadom) were ever to be a part of institutions like the Cliburn fingerfest, we could actually deem the latter a genuine musical event, and its counterparts in other regions of the Western world laudable emulations. As things stand, those who examine Horowitz's indictment will find themselves viewing the piano-competition syndrome much as the Israelites viewed Belshazzar's court: painfully aware of its rottenness and hoping to God that the roof soon falls in. □

R. J. Stove writes for National Review, *the* Weekend Australian, *and* Quadrant.

[1] How touchingingly outdated in this respect is Somerset Maugham's poignant short story "The Alien Corn"! In the climactic scene, the hero, who for years has sweated blood studying the piano in Munich, is told by a legendary female pianist that he will never in a thousand years be a distinguished player of his instrument. Hero then goes and shoots himself. Nowadays he would simply enter competition after competition, garner medal after medal for his inoffensiveness, and delay the moment of reckoning with his talent's actual scale until he was on his deathbed, if indeed it occurred then.

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THE EXCLUDED AMERICANS: HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING POLICIES

William Tucker/Regnery Gateway/389 pp. $24.95

Roger Starr

This shaggy book has a well-placed heart and a mass of information on American homes and the home-building industry. Its subtitle suggests that misguided government intervention, including rent control, zoning, building and housing codes, urban renewal programs, "slum clearance," and public housing are responsible for the homelessness that has become a problem in many American cities, large and not so large. These programs discourage the construction of new housing, deliberately in some cases, by making housing development more expensive and land less readily available.

Urban renewal, slum clearance, and the construction of public housing require the destruction of cheap housing that already exists. While many demolished homes do not meet legislated standards of space, light and air, and physical amenities, Tucker claims that most of the people who had been living in them preferred remaining where they were to the hardship of moving.

In public policy terms, what is the governmental liability for the provision of homes? National housing legislation stipulates that every American family shall have access to a decent, safe, and sanitary home in a suitable living environment. Does the promise extend to people with severe mental illness? To families bedeviled with drug addictions? To unmarried teenage mothers and their children? Does a "living environment" suitable for low-income, two-parent families with conventional child-rearing ideas *remain* suitable after the introduction of families nearby whose behavior radically changes the nature of the neighborhood? If no, which tenant is to be moved? In what other kinds of environments are troublesome families to be placed? And if they are allowed to remain in public or publicly assisted housing, what kind of society will emerge?

These questions merely point out that the government programs making housing construction more difficult and causing the decay and abandonment of existing homes, are not the main causes of the current homelessness "crisis," if indeed it should be so categorized. Nevertheless, policy defects play an important role in making the supply of housing unsatisfactory for families at all but the highest income levels.

Of all the government initiatives, rent control, on the basis of its sheer economic idiocy, its stimulation of half-baked and destructive class antagonisms, its corruption of public officials, and its undermining of municipal ratables, ranks first as a troublemaker. Tucker's account of rent control in action from New York to Santa Monica is as definitive as one could want. He points out that rent control generally encourages people to stay in the apartment in which they were living when the law became effective, or at least to keep their names on the lease, legally or otherwise. The rents of long-term occupants thus remain far below rents legally chargeable in apartments—usually of lesser quality—that have changed hands often.

Two forms of maldistribution follow. Low-rent, poor-quality apartments turn over so frequently that their legal rent ceilings are much higher than low-income families are able to pay, resulting in vacancies that contribute to the abandonment and destruction of useful living space. Meanwhile, families of greater affluence remain in high-quality apartments that are more spacious than they need, simply because they pay unmatchably low rents for them.

Rent controls in Berkeley and Santa Monica have given hate-filled, left-wing local legislators and executives the chance to do tremendous damage to the housing supply, to cause great hardship to property owners, especially small ones, and to create a political atmosphere fraught with anger and resentment. In New York City, judges and hearing officers in specialized courts dealing with housing do not recognize the relationship between the rental income of a building and the owner's ability to keep it in good condition. The law seems almost deliberately intended to give such persons an opportunity to vent their spleen on people unfortunate enough to own real property that is subject to rent regulation.

Tucker is on less solid ground when he treats zoning laws and building and housing codes as though they were of equal importance in limiting the supply of housing. Building codes are intended not only to assure safety to the owners and occupants of particular buildings, but also to protect nearby property against the contagious dangers of fire and disease. They achieve these goals, but at a high cost. Building codes tend to limit the types of approved components or forms of construction so as to increase the use of site labor, discourage competition from out-of-town suppliers, resist innovation, and support unionization. Yet, without them, some money-saving innovations may expose the experimental building's owners and the neighborhood to unexpected hazards.

Zoning, in Tucker's view, is a device for restricting access to the land by poor people and those considered undesirable by the original settlers (who may have moved in six months earlier) because of their religion, skin color, or the shape of their eyes. It is beyond question that abuses of zoning are becoming steadily more outrageous, raising transitory questions of architectural taste to the status of permanent principles. Zoning now makes all new buildings conform in cornice line, bulk, shape, and land coverage to the buildings already erected. There's obviously no right and wrong in these aesthetic considerations, but the general principle of zoning, the attempt to limit external costs on existing property owners and users, is reasonable. As with other such laws, however, the original purpose soon suggested to local powers ways of stifling new development altogether by making zoning more restrictive, costly, and difficult to appeal. The environmental movement, whose deeds get no special salutes from Tucker and me, has found new ways to smother development by creating an immense superstructure over existing zoning, calculated either to freeze the present status or to shield it from truly dangerous pollution or other major deleterious influences that would come with change.

Tucker acknowledges that zoning merely carries on in public form the land controls imposed by developers through private covenants. These documents, running with the land and binding its future purchasers in perpetuity, were used before government developed zoning to take over the function of restricting use and development. They tended to keep future owners from selling to members of unwelcome races or ethnic groups, a practice struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in recent years.

Zoning is now following two conflicting tendencies. City planners are trying to broaden their scope of zoning control, while major developers write more restrictive rules for the purchasers of free-standing condominiums (no lines for hanging out the wash, no sandboxes, house painting in approved colors only, etc.). At the same time, the Supreme Court is classifying some zoning restrictions as impermissible extensions of police power, making them unconstitutional "takings" of an owner's property rights and entitling him to seek compensation.

To all of this, Tucker adds the reduction in institutional homes (usually counted as "beds") that accompanied the encouraged (if not entirely forced) eviction of 350,000 mental patients, about two-thirds of the population, during the Carter years.

Tucker does not argue that the reduction in the institutional population means that 350,000 of the original 500,000 have gained the ability to cope with a non-therapeutic environment. Nor does he claim that society has ceased producing new mentally ill people. Yet Tucker forgets the connection between personal pathology and inability to find a home. If we accept his estimate that the total number of homeless is less than a million, then for a considerable part of them the problem of shelter does not simply reflect the unaffordability of a new home that meets local government standards of habitability.

It is never easy to balance the interests of newcomers against the fears of those who already have homes and are worried about their ability to keep up with tax payments as the town they live in grows. Yet, this issue is not at the heart of the problem of the "excluded" people. Most people are excluded from decent housing because they earn too little money to pay for the complicated artifact housing has become. Tucker suggests that the same filtering-down principle that works well with used automobiles, providing aging but usable cars for those who cannot afford new ones, works with housing. He blames reformers for insisting on new housing for those who can't afford it, and for sponsoring housing codes to prevent older properties being converted from one-family to two- or three-family usage.

The main issue is that the poor can't afford to live in housing of the standards legislated for contemporary use. That means that they must receive transfer payments in one form or another; or that housing standards must be changed or dropped altogether; or that a democratic society must grow accustomed to living in the shadow of a defaulted egalitarianism with respect to the home, the crucial, long-term setting of national life. There is no fourth choice, and for those families or households incapable of living in a style acceptable to neighbors, not even the monetary solution will bring about housing equality with individual liberty. □

Roger Starr is the author of The Rise and Fall of New York City.

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DESPERADO

by Algis Valiunas

On December 16, 1988, Mr. Leonardo Mercado of Miami got into a strenuous tussle with six local police officers, an ill-advised course of action for even the most upright of citizens to undertake, let alone a much-arrested drug dealer whom police suspected of putting a contract out on one of their membership. Mercado paid for his lapse in judgment with his life, such as it was. His corpse, loaded with cocaine and marijuana, bore forty-four bruises and lacerations; an Adidas sneaker print was embossed on his forehead, the relic of a fast break that must have been conducted at very high speed indeed.

The police officers, known as the Jump Out Gang, went on trial in Miami this past November, charged with conspiring to commit murder, violating Mercado's civil rights by murdering him, and violating Mercado's teenaged stepsons' civil rights by beating them. The policeman maintained that Mercado had gone berserk and it had required extraordinary force to subdue him. Miami is a town slow to buy a case like the one for Mercado. Numerous prospective jurors informed the court that Mercado had, by his choice of profession, violated their civil rights and surrendered his own. The witnesses for the prosecution, taken from Mercado's troops, affronted simple decency and grated it raw. Mercado's stepsons, Pedro and Jose Soto, were confessed drug dealers and perjurers; one lawyer dubbed them "Teenage Mutant Ninja Sotos." Pedro offered the most colorful testimony, with his charge that one policeman had defenestrated him head-first and thereby caused him to fly "like Superman." In a pre-trial statement, however, Pedro had said that he'd been coming in through the window and the policeman had simply pushed him back out, like a wingless criminal buffoon.

On December 3, the jury acquitted the officers on seventeen counts and voted eleven to one for acquittal on the remaining seven counts. The verdict was the signal, long familiar in these precincts, for rioting to commence. Now two of the acquitted officers were Cuban, three black, and one white, while Mercado was Puerto Rican, so it was Mercado's old neighborhood of Wynwood, a Puerto Rican stronghold, that went up in flames. Although the Puerto Ricans are well represented in Miami's professional class, Wynwood is poor, and last year it had the city's highest crime rate. Yet, despite that imposing supremacy, Wynwood did not put on much of a riot. The damage to property was limited to some $30 million, and there were no serious injuries. The bolder rioters looted and torched some of the neighborhood's leading businesses, while the less ambitious settled for starting fires in dumpsters. Some of the looters had towels pulled up over their faces and others had paper bags pulled down over their heads, so that it appeared as though a pack of *intifada* desperadoes had hooked up with a horde of football fans in the throes of a serious grievance. The event was not purely a festival of mass larceny and destruction, however. There was much impassioned chanting, of Mercado's nickname, *Cano*, of such epithets as *bandoleros* and *asesinos*, and of the demand, in molten gold, *justicia*.

Justice is a lot to hope for, even under the most civilized human arrangements; in Miami the past several years, it has seemed beyond anyone's reach. The empire of lawlessness has demolished the rule of law. Many decent people took it for granted—and most people probably had a suspicion—that the police had murdered Mercado precisely as the prosecution had contended; this rough justice did not cause a tremor of offense among them. For these people, disgust with the murderous drug traffic, and with the general fecklessness of attempts to stem it, overcame the customary civilian regard for the legal process. They knew law wasn't good enough to get the job done anymore, and if some measure of justice was to be done, one shouldn't be appalled that it was shadowy and not quite clean.

Of course, who was shadowy and unclean if not Mercado, whose name nevertheless became a rallying cry for those Puerto Ricans demanding justice. For them, it did not matter that he had been a criminal preying on their neighborhood; he was a representative of their common plight. His death at the hands of the police supposedly bespoke their own danger from the lawlessness of the lawmen. Law had become the enemy, and still they called to the law for help, speeding things along with the help of a little gasoline. The rioters got as much help from the law as they deserved. So, too, one hopes, did Mercado and the six policemen. The entire affair, however, revealed this city in its naked hopelessness—aching, exhausted, and foul.

It is the intention of a black Miami lawyer, Mr. H. T. Smith, that all America be made to appreciate the singular foulness of Miami. He has made a videotape celebrating the city's wretchedness that he intends to distribute nationwide. Smith is the leader of a black boycott, which has been in effect since last July, of the city's convention industry. What provoked the boycott was the chill welcome that Miami gave to Nelson Mandela last June. The city's Cuban mayor, Xavier Suárez, took an immediate dislike to Mandela's longstanding fondness for such statesmen as Castro, Qaddafi, and Arafat. There were, consequently, no parades—no proclamations, even. (Someone pointed out that even Robo-Cop had received a proclamation; but then, the coming of Robo-Cop to Miami is precisely comparable to the coming of Christ anywhere else.)

The Mandela wound was still fresh in early July when a fight between a Cuban storeowner and a Haitian customer inspired a thousand Haitians to demonstrate outside the Rapid Transit Factory Outlet clothing store in Little Haiti. To make the Cubans pay for the Mandela insult—as well as to demand that the storeowner be jailed as the customer had been—was the crowd's vital passion. Signs read, "Viva Castro" and "Cubans Back to Cuba." Finally, as the demonstration was into its fifth day, police riot squads attacked the Haitians when they refused to disperse. Subsequently, there was much talk of justice and its opposite, and the incident further fueled the boycott.

H. T. Smith is leading the boycott of what is known as the hospitality industry because "riots don't work." Behind the talk of Mandela is a surprisingly sensible and attractive request for admission to the city's more desirable economic purlieus. Smith laughs darkly at the "mysterious mathematical coincidence" that the convention industry employs no black lawyers, no black accountants, and only a handful of black vendors. Young black professionals find Miami so inhospitable that they head north *en masse*, to Atlanta. Blacks have even lost out on the lower-paying service jobs, although they had filled most of them before the 1960s, when the Cubans arrived. The tourism industry, Smith declares, has boycotted blacks for the past twenty or thirty years. "For blacks [Miami is] Selma, Alabama."

Smith has already steered between $5 and $25 million in business away from Miami. On a local television talk show he had the opposition begging to know what it can do to bring the thing to an end. Unfortunately, Smith cleaves to some nebulous but non-negotiable notions of black self-respect, so it seems that the obvious economic concessions will not be sufficient. The Mandela business is intractable, an excuse for perpetual bickering. Smith doesn't have it in him to see that Mandela's heroism is deeply vitiated—some would say, negated—by his warmth toward certain unspeakable regimes, and that there is no reason to expect people who have suffered from one such regime to welcome him with honor into their city of exile. Smith's boycott may yet earn the blacks in Miami some taste of justice, but only if he moderates his understanding of what justice consists in. For there will not be any justice in this town so long as everyone demands his own above everyone else's and self-righteousness shades readily into hatred. □

Algis Valiunas, a Chicago writer, vacationed in Miami last December.

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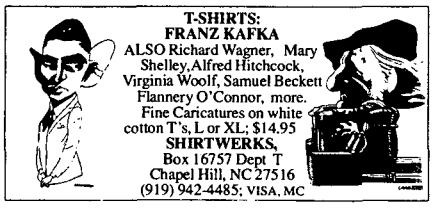
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CURRENT WISDOM

New York Times

Black humor:

If Nancy Cruzan truly lived only the first 25 years of her life, the remaining 8 were remarkably productive. She is responsible for a Supreme Court decision that . . . will free countless Americans of some of the fears attending death. "I think this is quite an accomplishment for a 25-year-old kid," her father said, "and I'm damn proud of her."

[December 27, 1990]

The Great Books Series

In competition for the most egregious mixed metaphor, a Mr. Hedrick Smith achieves a world record:

The second major incident that stepped on the Reagan parade in 1981, and nearly derailed it, was another self-inflicted wound . . .

[from The Power Game, *by Hedrick Smith, Ballantine Books, 1989, page 358]*

Interview

Another of America's moral colossi, whilst dining with anti-abortionists, finds veal on the menu and abandons himself to art:

Veal is not just a baby cow that meets with an accident in the barnyard. Veal doesn't live life to the cow max. Veal is an animal that lives its entire life in darkness and bondage, confined to a crate so it can't develop its muscles, its flesh thus remaining tender to the tooth. The veal calf is force-fed a diet that contains no iron and is confined in a crate that is assembled without nails within reach of its tongue so it won't even be able to lick steel nails. The critter we call veal lives in a state of deliberately induced anemia so that its flesh will be appealingly white to the diner. If the veal were not slaughtered at a young age, it would die of anemia before attaining maturity anyway.

Not a very good choice for feeding the pro-choice. The veal calf has no choice in its own short life, even if it's rated choice by the U.S. government. Perhaps unborn veal would have been a better choice for the dinner—at least it would have been spared the cruelty of the innocent veal calf's cruel and unusual punishment in a bizarre outside world. Unborn veal knows only the relative bliss of the womb.

Choice isn't something that happens a few times in one's life, in a moment of crisis. Choice is a constant. Every day, every hour presents opportunities to do the right thing, to do the better thing, aesthetically, morally—hey, cosmically too, huh? When we choose to exercise our rights we have the opportunity to act for the betterment of all life. A woman shouldn't have to bear a child she doesn't want—but that's not the only important choice she will ever make. Some other important ones might be served up when they're least expected.

[May 1990]

New York Times

Another act of unprovoked narcissism from the appalling Anna Quindlen:

Nixon was our introduction to government. He taught us that politicians were always other people, deeply unlike ourselves. Our parents believed we would outgrow our dislike of him, just as we would outgrow our rock-and-roll. They were wrong on both counts. It is commonplace to think that the pivotal leader of our formative years was John F. Kennedy. But Kennedy was never much more than fleeting myth, the epitome of what might have been; Nixon became what was.

When we think of the war, when we think of the draft lottery, when we think of the enemies list and the President bugging himself, even when we think of the mothers who said, "If that skirt was any shorter you'd be naked" and the fathers who said, "You can cut that hair or you can find another place to live," hovering over all is Nixon. The image of him walking on the beach in a suit and lace-up shoes became a metaphor for everything we hated. He was the ultimate adult at a time when adult had become the greatest pejorative.

You can get a good argument going at a liberal gathering these days about who was more pernicious, Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan, the canny lifelong politician or the vague, paternalistic pitchman. Ronald Reagan's winning nowadays. But then something happens to remind you that, in terms of sheer symbolism, there's no contest: Nixon's the one.

[November 11, 1990]

Alternatives

In a prestigious New Orleans monthly, a philosophic defense of masturbation by one of America's foremost onanists (name withheld):

By identifying with the rational, we have exiled from our lives our women, our children and the planet that sustains us. And, we have praised ourselves as genius in the doing. By severing mind from body we have sanctified thought and condemned feeling. With that we have produced an insensitivity to the pain we inflict on ourselves and others.

In order to counteract the resulting alienation and isolation, in order to feel passion with and not against ourselves, others, and the Earth, we men must re-discover our own bodies—not instrumentally, as objects to be manipulated to fit into a preconceived ideal. We must learn to value our bodies as the source of knowledge, pleasure, dignity and our connection with the divine. We must learn to trust the non-rational—intuition, feelings, the unexplainable and the unknown. By doing so, we can strip ourselves of our puny insistence to be masters in control, and surrender to powers of which we are only a part.

I believe an exploration of surrender will be central during the next decade.

[November 1990]

Wall Street Journal

The baneful spread of the deconstructionist menace, as displayed in the howl columns of the venerable *Journal*:

In the case of my four-year-old, though, since he is clearly twice as sophisticated as his two-year-old sister, I must gear my pitch to him accordingly. I'll say, "Look Sebastian, it's 'Monsterpiece Theater!' Now observe closely, here's something you may have missed the first 20 or 30 times that you saw it. You recall the discussion we recently had about the evolution of obscenity laws and how public acceptance of the 'frog' expletive has changed through the years? This episode is a good example of an ironic allusion to a previously scandalous use of the term. When Kermit says to Miss Scarlet that he doesn't have the froggiest, we know that he means something other than what he says, and this is what makes it funny. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

And I know that he does because he always answers, "Sure, Dad," with just a soupcon of irony.

—Garrett Tomczak
Minneapolis

[December 6, 1990]

Santa Cruz Sentinel

From historic Santa Cruz, a report on the recent doings of a local chapter of Americans for Democratic Action:

Calling all dolphins and whales! Two groups are seeking your attendance at a two-day festival of dancing, prayer, meditation, drumming, visualizations and music today and Saturday at the Loudon Nelson Center and the Municipal Wharf.

The Bay Area Dolphin Experience (BADGE) and the New World Institute are asking "all dolphins and whales in the area to come to the wharf Saturday at noon to meditate and party with us."

All humans are invited to assemble at the Nelson Center at 7 p.m. tonight to invite the finny friends to the Municipal Wharf tonight and Saturday. Meditation invitations to the seagoing guests begin on the Wharf at noon Saturday.

After the dolphins and whales arrive, they'll be asked to participate in an "interspecies meditation to stop the killing of dolphins and whales and clean the pollution out of Monterey Bay and the world's oceans."

Dolphins are pretty easy to call, said Asa Williams, 66, a one-time deputy assessor for Contra Costa County and now a "high-class bum who walks around the world."

He attracts dolphins "by prayer, meditation, visualization and breathing. There's a dolphin breath that I've learned . . .

"You take a long, slow breath, breathing from the bottom (of your lungs). You fill up to your maximum and dive into your psyche like the dolphin dives in the oceans."

[November 9, 1990]

Village Voice

The American Renaissance continues:

Kyle Gann: *From 1983 to '85 you quit writing for electric guitars. Why, after that, did you decide to write for 100 guitars?*

Rhys Chatham: It started with a bet. I was touring with [dancer] Karole Armitage in 1980. This was the height of "noise-rock." I didn't think I was doing noise-rock, but I decided to let the label stick. So I thought, wouldn't it be great to get 100 electric guitars, put them in a small room, lock the audience in, have them play really loud, and call the piece *Torture Chamber*? . . .

It was scary, because no one has ever written a piece especially for 100 guitars. Guitarists have massed together; I think the world record is 265 guitarists playing "Louie Louie." But this is the largest proper ensemble, and it's a special sound.

[November 27, 1990]

New York Times

A blast to the lower lumbar vertebrae of Mr. Garry Kasparov, supplied by the estimable *Times*'s politically correct chess columnist:

The champion's choice of the Scotch Opening flew in the face of a century of experience, which says the opening naively hits the center so early that its striking force is quickly dissipated. But that is not so unusual these days, when almost everyone attempts to surprise their opponents with the most outlandish or outmoded thing they can think of. What is more unusual is Kasparov's picking an opening that has a certain vogue with the women's world champion, Maya Chiburdanidze. One would surely have expected the champion, an outspoken male chauvinist, to avoid anything whose leading proponent nowadays is a woman.

[November 28, 1990]

Washington Post

Richard Cohen's wistful reflections on a bizarre affair gone sour:

Peace Lady called from California. She has a plan to bring peace to the Persian Gulf region. Her scheme is to divvy up Kuwait's oil so that Iraq gets what she says is its fair share. To Peace Lady's utter surprise, I reacted with anger. Saddam Hussein gets nothing, I said. After many years and dozens of calls, Peace Lady and I have broken up. The phone went click.

Peace Lady and I go back a long way—so long that maybe I owe her an explanation for why we now have what the lawyers call "irreconcilable differences." After all, we once agreed on almost everything. We were both opposed to the war in Vietnam, questioned some of the assumptions of U.S. foreign policy and viewed the Reagan administration's visceral anticommunism with some trepidation. We still can't get all that upset about the Sandinistas.

[December 13, 1990]

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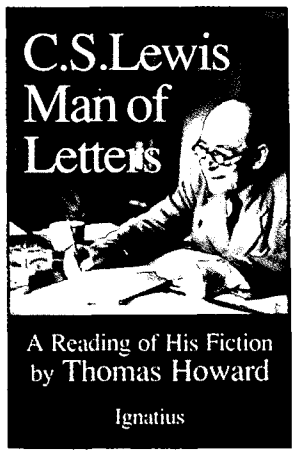

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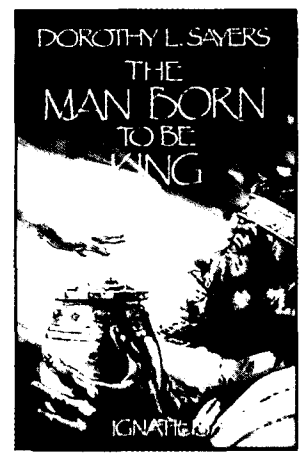

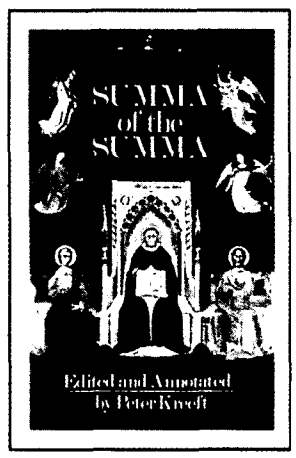

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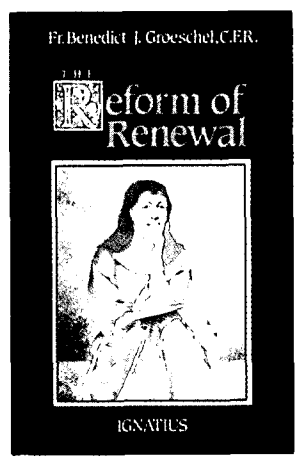

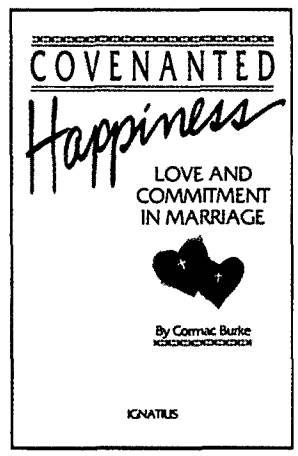

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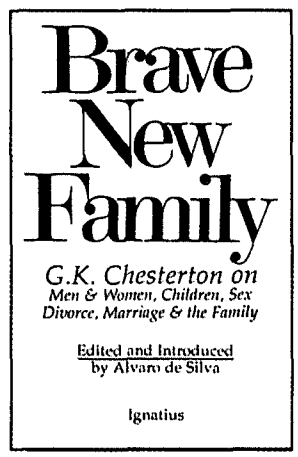

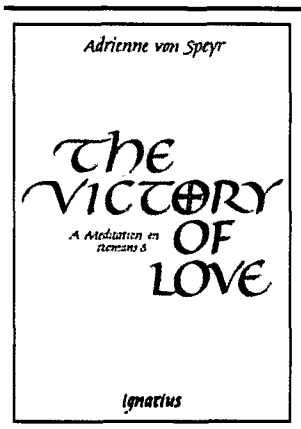

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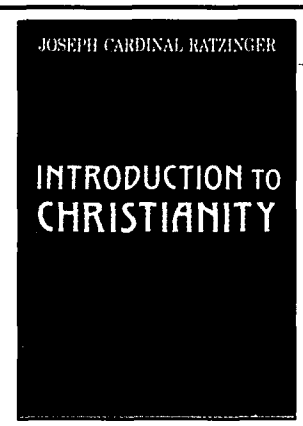

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